

Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science

Volume 42 | Annual Issue

Article 27

1935

Life History of Two Plastic Species of Polygonum; Their Economic Role

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Recommended Citation

Hayden, Ada (1935) "Life History of Two Plastic Species of Polygonum; Their Economic Role," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 42(1), 91-91.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol42/iss1/27>

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A FLORA OF WINNESHIEK AND ALLAMAKEE
COUNTIES

W. L. TOLSTEAD

During the summers of 1933 and 1934 about 750 species of flowering plants, ferns, and mosses were collected in Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties. They have been deposited in the Herbarium of Iowa State College. The rich flora is represented by remnants of the forest and prairie which once covered the region. Many weed and exotic plants have been introduced, and a number of species reported by early collectors appear to have become extinct. Many others are becoming rare.

DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY,
IOWA STATE COLLEGE,
AMES, IOWA.

LIFE HISTORY OF TWO PLASTIC SPECIES OF POLY-
GONUM; THEIR ECONOMIC RÔLE

ADA HAYDEN

The fruits of *Polygonum coccineum* Muhl. and *P. natans* A. Eaton constitute an important source of food for waterfowl. Both species, particularly *P. coccineum*, commonly invade crops. Both are widely distributed in Iowa, and have been observed in the field in several forms and varieties: *P. natans* forma *genuinum* (A. Eaton) Stanford, and forma *Hartwrightii* (Gray) Stanford; *P. Coccineum* forma *terrestrae* (Willd.) Stanford, forma *natans* (Wiegand) Stanford, and var. *pratincola* (Greene) Stanford. The several forms of either species may occur on the single rootstock growing in dry ground bordering ponds. Each species has been converted from terrestrial to aquatic form under experimental control. All forms or varieties fruit under conditions of sufficient moisture. *Polygonum natans* shows less plasticity of root system than does *P. coccineum* which invades uplands. There the root system penetrates the soil 12 or more feet, but in aquatic stations only 12 to 18 inches.

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