

PENNSYLVANIA SMARTWEED

Polygonum pensylvanicum L.
plant symbol = POPE2

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program



Robert H. Mohlbrock
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Midwest Wetland Flora
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Uses

This plant is an excellent wildlife food plant, especially for waterfowl. Twenty species of ducks, geese, bobwhites, mourning doves, ring-necked pheasants, and four species of rails, as well as 30 nongame birds, eat the seeds. Dense stands provide cover for young waterfowl, marsh birds, and wintering pheasants. Plants and/or seeds are eaten by white-footed mice, muskrat, raccoons, and fox squirrels.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

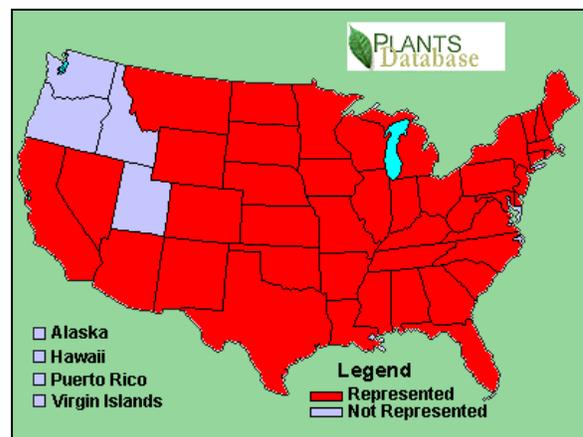
Description

Pennsylvania smartweed is an annual herb that has small, five-parted pink or rose colored flowers on a short spike. The flowering branches have stalked glands. The alternate leaves have sheaths extending around the stems. The seeds are black, shiny, flattened, and almost round. There are approximately 62,000 seeds per pound.

Adaptation

Pennsylvania smartweed is adapted to soils of all drainage classes except droughty soils. It commonly occurs on mudflats of fresh water to moderately brackish areas throughout the Northeast.

Known Distribution



8/16/00

Establishment

A seedbed that reduces most weed competition and permits smartweed to be covered by one inch of soil depth is usually sufficient. Drop water quickly and broadcast seed on top of wet ground in mudflats or drawdown areas. Seed after last killing frost in the spring. Smartweed may be seeded later so that seed maturity coincides with the arrival of migratory birds. Seeds are generally broadcast at a rate of 10-15 pounds per acre.

Management

As an upland wildlife food source, plant either in pure stands or in mixtures with other suitable and adapted species. For waterfowl food, draw down water where necessary shortly before planting. Do not reflood until plants are at least 6 inches in height. Flood to 12-18 inches during the migratory season. Replant annually to assure a uniform stand. A light

harrowing is recommended to encourage natural re-establishment of stands.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

No varieties exist but common seed may be obtained through wildlife and game food seed dealers.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

USDA NRCS Northeast Plant Materials Program

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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