

Smooth dock

Rumex altissimus

Description

Habit

Perennial, unbranched or sparingly branched reaching a height of 1.5-4 ft.

Leaves

Alternate, 4-10 in. long, 3 in. wide, lance-elliptic in shape, hairless, toothless, somewhat shiny, pointed at the tip, wedge-shaped at the base, mostly flat with wavy edges; lower leaves are the largest and long-stalked becoming smaller and shorter stalked as they ascend.

Stems

Light green in color, stout, erect, hairless, ribbed, and unbranched or few-branched, often with short shoots or leaf clumps in the axils just below the flower clusters.

Flowers

1/4 in. long (4.5-6 mm.), light green in color,





3-sided with 2 series of tepals; borne in branching clusters, numerous whorls of 10-20 slender-stalked flowers, lower whorls more widely separated.

Fruits and Seeds

Each flower produces a single seed, wrapped in a persistent tepal that forms a dry brown capsule. Seeds are 3-sided, egg-shaped, with a short tapered tip, dark reddish brown in color and 2-2.8 mm. long.

Habitat

Native to North America. Can be found in disturbed sites, ditches, roadsides, wet fields, marshes, shorelines, riverbanks.

Reproduction

By seed.

Similar

There are several native and Eurasian *Rumex* species that are similar. All can be distinguished by their leaf characteristics, tepal shape, grain size and shape, and flower stalk length to name a few.

Credits

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