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Pennsylvania smartweed

Polygonum pensylvanicum L.

Life cycle

Erect summer annual.

Leaves

Cotyledons are narrow oval to lance-shaped with rounded tips. Leaves are alternate, lance-shaped with pointed tips and smooth margins, usually hairless and occasionally with a purple watermark.

Stems

Branched, erect up to 4 feet tall and jointed with swollen nodes. A smooth, membranous sheath (ocrea) surrounds the stem at the base of each petiole.

Flowers and fruit

Small, pink to white flowers form in dense, spike-like clusters at the tips of stems. The seed is enclosed in a single-seeded, flat, glossy black, round to oval fruit with a pointed tip.

Reproduction

Seeds.



Pennsylvania smartweed leaf.

Polygonaceae (Smartweed family)

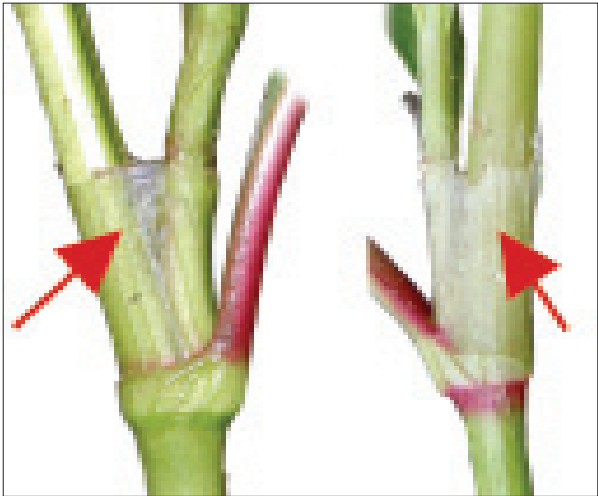
Pennsylvania smartweed *continued*



Pennsylvania smartweed immature flower cluster.



Pennsylvania smartweed seedling.



Left: Pennsylvania smartweed ocrea. Right: Ladysthumb ocrea.

Polygonaceae (Smartweed family)

Pennsylvania smartweed *continued*

Similar weeds

Ladysthumb (*P. persicaria* L.)

Differs by having a fringe of bristly hairs at the top of the ocrea. Usually has a purple watermark on leaf.

Pale smartweed (*P. lapathifolium* L.)

Differs by having young leaf undersides with whitish hair, older leaf undersides with yellow glands and a nodding inflorescence.

Swamp smartweed

(*P. amphibium* var. *emersum* Michx.)

Differs by having perennial, creeping, woody rhizomes and usually hairy foliage; found in wetter environment.



Hairy foliage of swamp smartweed.