



Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

water smartweed

Polygonum amphibium

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

Features

Water smartweed is a perennial herb with rhizomes. It is one of 20 species of smartweeds found in Iowa. The stems are upright and up to three feet tall. Leaves are in an alternate arrangement along the stem. They are oblong, without teeth, and up to four inches long on a leaf stalk that's up to four inches long. The flowers are clustered in ovoid spikes up to two inches long. The fruits are pale brown, not shiny, and about one-tenth to one-eighth inch long.

Natural History

Water smartweed grows in marshes and around ponds and lakes. It flowers from June through August. The fruits provide an important food source for waterfowl. It is common in central Iowa and the lakes area of the northwest part of the Des Moines Lobe and less common in the remainder of the state.

Habitats

natural lakes and prairie marshes; interior rivers and streams; wet prairies and fens; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; Mississippi River; Missouri River