

Notes on the Flora of Chicago and Vicinity

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Notes on the flora of Chicago and vicinity.

E. J. HILL.

From time to time the writer has furnished the BOTANICAL GAZETTE with lists of plants from the neighborhood of Chicago, and especially from the adjoining pine-barren region of northwestern Indiana, accompanied by such notes upon them and their distribution as seemed desirable. The present notes are in continuation of this work. Some of the plants to be noticed have already been mentioned in Higley and Raddin's "Flora of Cook county, Illinois, and a part of Lake county, Indiana," which appeared in the spring of 1891. Some have been detected since that time.

NATURALIZED PLANTS.—Of naturalized plants, either weeds or useful plants, the following may be mentioned:

1. *Nasturtium sylvestre* R. Br.—This European plant, well established in the Atlantic coast states, though rare, is quite abundant near Western Springs, a village nine miles west of the city. It grows along a highway north of the village, flourishing in the clay soil, and spreading from wayside pond holes up to the wagon tracks, where it is subject to a goodly amount of dryness at some seasons. Where the road crosses Salt Creek, a neighboring stream, the plants have spread in the rich, damp soil of the open woods along the creek. Some plants had gained a footing in the scanty soil lodged in the crevices of the stone masonry forming the retaining walls of the approaches to a bridge spanning the stream. A habit so unusual for a nasturtium shows its hardness and persistence, and indicates that it has come to stay. The locality is in the midst of cultivated fields and meadows.

2. *Trifolium hybridum* L.—It is stated in the "Flora of Cook county," already mentioned, that a few specimens of this have been found near lines of railroads from the east. In 1886 I found it common in a field near Forest Hill, in the southwestern part of the city. Clumps of it were growing in a meadow about as freely as those of red clover, and it had spread to the adjoining street. It was so plentiful as to lead one to think it may have been sown along with the tame grass of the field.¹

3. *Medicago sativa* L.—The only place where I have met with alfalfa is in a meadow near East Chicago, Ind., where it

¹ This species is abundant near Madison, Wis., thoroughly established and spreading rapidly.—EDS.

grows spontaneously in the grass. The farm where it occurs is an old one for the locality, being cleared in early days in the pine woods, and is still encircled with timber. It is not reported elsewhere in the vicinity of Chicago.

4. *Helianthus annuus* L.—This is not the cultivated plant escaped from gardens, but one introduced from the plains. It is well established in the western part of the city, near Brighton Park and along the C., B. & Q. R. R. The locations reveal how it has been brought here, as it is seen most abundantly where the refuse from stock trains has been thrown out of the cars along the embankments, or piled in the fields. It has spread from such places into the neighboring fields, and is sharing the ground with *H. grosse-serratus*, the most common indigenous helianthus in such situations. The heads of flowers are quite variable in size, the disks an inch or two in diameter, and are mostly larger than any of our wild sunflowers, and with a different aspect.

5. *Solanum rostratum* Dunal.—I came across this first in 1886, near Liverpool, Ind., and it was reported in the BOT. GAZ., XIII, 323. The same year it was found at South Chicago, as mentioned by Higley and Raddin. In 1890 I found it at Dune Park, Porter co., Ind., along the L. S. & M. S. R. R., somewhat farther east than the station at Liverpool, on the Pennsylvania line. I have not yet seen it in any field.

6. *Amarantus blitoides* Watson.—This is now very common by the railroads and highways leading into the city. It is not difficult to determine very nearly the time of its appearance at Chicago. I noticed it at Englewood in 1875, having come here to reside the fall before. Not finding this amarant described in the current hand-books, specimens were sent to Dr. Gray for determination, which was kindly done, and the statement added, "pretty common west." It is not mentioned in Babcock's "Flora of Chicago and Vicinity," published in the *Lens*, the last part of which was issued in December, 1873. Speaking to him about the plant sometime after it was found, he stated that he was aware of its presence south of the city, but had not seen it at the time his flora was compiled. It evidently came in from the west or south about that time, as it was not uncommon by the roadsides in Englewood in 1875. It is not given in Patterson's "Plants of Illinois" (1876), nor in the "Catalogue of Plants of Indiana (BOT. GAZ., 1881), nor in Wheeler and Smith's Michigan catalogue

(1881). As the last edition of Gray's Manual states that it has spread eastward to western New York, it has evidently gone this distance since about 1873. It is often a very vigorous grower, the prostrate stems sometimes three or four feet long, covering the ground like a mat, and producing seed in great abundance. Though the foliage resembles that of *A. albus*, the general appearance of the plant is very different from that of the globular and bushy tumble weed.

7. *Cycloloma platyphyllum* Moquin.—It is stated in Gray's Manual (6th edition), that this western plant extends to western Illinois and southern Indiana. It also occurs here and was first reported in Babcock's list (supplementary part, December, 1873), as "rare" by the I. C. R. R. In 1875 I found it growing by the C., R. I. & P. R. R., near the normal school in Englewood. Last year I saw it by the L. S. & M. S. R. R., between Miller's and Dune Park, Ind. It also occurs at the city of Evanston, north of Chicago. From its behavior, and the places where it grows, near the lines of railway, it is plainly adventive, having appeared doubtless about the time Babcock mentioned it. It is spreading eastward, and may be looked for further along on the railroad lines extending to the east. Macoun, in his "Catalogue of Canadian Plants" (1886), reports it as already in the streets of London, Ont., and remarks concerning it, "Fully established and spreading, an importation from the west."

8. *Salsola Kali* L.—Reported in Higley and Raddin's "Flora" as frequent on the lake shore at Evanston. In 1890 I obtained it in two localities east of the city, Wolf Lake and Clarke, Ind. Both are on the Penn. R. R., from a mile to a mile and a half from the shore of Lake Michigan. Evidently the plants were not derived from the Evanston locality, but were introduced in some way by the railroad, as they were close by the tracks or between the rails, and in very dry ground. Being a sea shore plant at the east, and one of river bottoms in northwestern Nebraska and central Dakota, with stations in southwestern Dakota (Yankton), and northwestern Iowa (Emmet Co.), and southern Wisconsin (Madison), the localities about Chicago are somewhat intermediate, and the plants may have been introduced from the east or west. It is clearly adventive at Clarke, and has all the appearance of it at Wolf Lake, and is so regarded by the authors of the "Flora" at Evanston.

NATIVE PLANTS.—There are a few plants of a different character, native to the region, which are worthy of mention.

1. *Desmodium Illinoense* Gray.—Found last year at Auburn Park within the limits of the city. It has been known hitherto as a plant of western Illinois and westward. From the locality where it grew it was evidently indigenous, and may occur elsewhere in this vicinity, as it is easily overlooked from its close resemblance to one or two other species of this troublesome genus.¹

2. *Rosa setigera* Michx.—In the summer of 1890 I came across a few bushes, or clumps of bushes, of this rose at Willow Springs, in the southwestern part of Cook county, Ill. They were on the wooded hills which rise abruptly on the east side of the Desplaines river. They grew on the borders of rather wet spots, covered with sedge and coarse grass, little prairie-like openings often seen in the woods which crown the low drift-hills of this region. None of them were climbing, being too far from any support. Some of the growing shoots of the season, arching over and with the ends trailing on the ground, were six to eight feet long by the middle of July. Being in full bloom, with some of the masses of bushes several yards across, they presented a very attractive appearance, as it was my first sight of the climbing rose in its wild state. The first impression was that they were escapes from cultivation, but a careful examination of the locality led to a different conclusion. A year later the species was found on the west side of the Desplaines, a couple of miles below. In a narrow strip of woods between the river and Flag Creek, which enters it at this point, they occur plentifully, clambering over shrubs and climbing small trees. These stations seemed to have eluded the vigilance of local collectors, for the species had hitherto the following record for the vicinity of Chicago: "But two specimens have been found, one at Morgan Park, the other at Desplaines." In Patterson's catalogue of the plants of Illinois its most northerly locality reported was Peoria county, where Dr. Brendel found it. All of these stations are in the basin of the Illinois river, or close by, the Desplaines being its tributary, and Morgan Park being situated on the dividing ridge between it and Lake Michigan. The prairie rose is rare in Michigan, though one of its common names is the Michigan rose, but is considered indigenous there.

¹ Reported as found at Ann Arbor, Mich., in Beal and Wheeler's *Michigan Flora* (1892).

3. *Rosa Engelmanni* Watson.—Specimens of this were obtained last year at Pine, Ind., with oblong-obovate fruit. Those seen before in this vicinity have nearly always had oblong fruit, as mentioned in a former communication to the BOTANICAL GAZETTE (XV, 310.) The canes were from four to eight feet high, and closely resembled in foliage and fruit taller examples of this rose seen at Vermilion Lake, Minn., in 1889. As compared with *R. blanda*, it is usually a taller and more robust shrub, with abundant leafage, the stems, particularly the lower part, often densely covered with fine prickles. It prefers damper and generally more shaded situations, approaching in this respect *R. Carolina*. It partakes of another character of *R. Carolina*, which is not so common in the case of *R. blanda*, that of frequently being massed in large clumps, and occupying the ground quite exclusively. I detected this rose last year at Rogers Park, near the lake shore in the northern part of Chicago.

4. *Cacalia suaveolens* L.—Found in a single locality by the Calumet river, near Porter, Ind. It has not before been reported from this part of the state, nor from the vicinity of Chicago, though said by Dr. Phinney to be common in the eastern-central part of Indiana. Only one locality is assigned to it in Michigan, on the authority of Winchell's catalogue.

5. *Epigaea repens*.—Though common at Michigan City, Ind., and extending from there north through Michigan, this plant has lately been found coming farther west around the head of Lake Michigan. Near the mouth of West City creek, north of Porter, it grows in the open sandy woods along the lake. As this stream drains the swampy land lying between the two lines or ridges of sand hills which here run somewhat parallel with the shore, it may extend up the stream still farther towards the west. In the Catalogue of Indiana Plants it is reported from Lake co., Ind., but none of the local lists give it, nor do I know of its presence here on the authority of collectors from this vicinity. Though a frequent plant on the east side of Lake Michigan, especially as one goes north, it seems to be rare on the west shore, or entirely absent, until the northern peninsula of Michigan is reached, whence it extends westward around Lake Superior into Minnesota. It has been reported from Beloit, Wis.

6. *Quercus Muhlenbergii* Engelm.—This oak comes into our

lake flora sparingly, being found by Wolf Lake just east of the Indiana line. The soil is sandy and of little strength, so that all the trees are small. They are scattered over an area of a few acres, and are quite isolated in their position. Southwest of the city this oak occurs again on the Desplaines below the mouth of Flag Creek. In the rich soil of the bottom land it makes a large tree. These are the only localities near Chicago where it is at present known to grow. About fifty miles south it is not uncommon by the Kankakee river. *Q. imbricaria* comes a little further north along the Desplaines and Flag Creek, thence extending south to Joliet and beyond.

7. *Eleocharis quadrangulata* R. Br.—Abundant in the shallow water of Wolf Lake, but within the city limits. In the Manual its range is not extended west of Michigan. It has been found in Illinois and Missouri in the vicinity of St. Louis. In Wolf Lake it very fully occupies the ground where it grows, preserving the character Elliott gives it in his "Sketch," (I, 79.) "In rice fields it becomes a very injurious intruder, as its thick creeping roots occupy the ground, and permit nothing to grow where they extend."

8. *Eleocharis olivacea* Torr.—While looking the past season for *E. capitata* R. Br., since the only station where it had hitherto been seen, at Whittings, Ind., seemed likely to be destroyed by the works of the Standard Oil Company, I found it again about a mile from the original locality. The new station is on the borders of Lake George. With it *E. olivacea* was also found. Both are quite plentiful in patches in the wet, marly sands in which these shallow lakes abound, since the fresh water mollusks are so prevalent that their comminuted shells form a whitish marl. Such a soil affects the flora to some extent. It is in this fine mud, a mixture of sand and calcareous earth, that these two species of *Eleocharis* grow. Both are densely cespitose, forming small tufts. The stems of *E. capitata* are erect or ascending, from half an inch to seven or eight inches high, and form fibrous, annual roots, while those of *E. olivacea* are diffuse or subdecumbent, from two to four inches long, and grow from a perennial rootstock half an inch to an inch in length. They fruit about the same time, the latter part of August and in September. Both are largely plants of the Atlantic coast region. *E. olivacea* extends to western New York and by Lake Erie to Erie, Pa. It is also said to occur

in Michigan. In Indiana it is reported from Gibson county, in the southwestern part of the state, and the station at Whitings places it in the extreme northwestern part.

9. *E. intermedia* Schultes.—This species also was obtained with the two just mentioned. It has been noticed but once before in our vicinity, at Hyde Park. The stems are considerably shorter than those usually described, being but two to four inches long. They are spreading or declining, densely cespitose, many small bunches making a large, compound tuft. I do not find it reported for Indiana, though it is found in Michigan, northern Illinois, Iowa, and northward. *E. acicularis*, everywhere common, grew with the three species named above, and the four could sometimes be collected within the area of a square yard.

Englewood, Chicago.

The plea of expediency.

N. L. BRITTON.

Inasmuch as Dr. Sereno Watson has in his last published words (BOTANICAL GAZETTE, June, 1892) defined his position and that of Dr. Gray, on the question of nomenclature, as one of expediency, it is desirable that this position be briefly examined.

It is very clear from the manner in which these botanists have illustrated their position in their writings, that it has been an individual rather than a general one. By this I mean that what has appeared to them "expedient" is the course which has been followed quite independently of what others may have so regarded, and it is this spirit which has led to all the antagonism which has been developed on the question of what specific name a plant should bear, as well as in many other questions during the last twenty-five years.

This epoch has been forcibly defined in a late issue of the GAZETTE (p. 164) as one of "a botanical aristocracy," during which there has been a good deal of "rank injustice done to both worthy but unknown, and known but underrated botanists." Coming from the source that this pungent statement does, from one who has been more closely identified with the