

EUPHORBIA SERPENS HBK.
Roundleaf Spurge

FAMILY: Euphorbiaceae

SYNONYM: *Chamaesyce serpens* (HBK.) Small

HABIT: Prostrate or repent annual herb, stem to 4 dm.; flowering July- October; fruiting July-October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Euphorbia serpens* can be distinguished from other members of the genus by the following combination of characters: stems and leaves glabrous; leaves gray-green, very small, entire, and opposite; stipules united into a triangular scale-like structure often lobed or fringed at the tip; and involucre with rather conspicuous white petal-like appendages.

TOTAL RANGE: S. Ontario to MT, s. to TN, FL, AZ, and tropical America, and intr. here and there eastward.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams and Pickaway Counties. Pre-1980 records are from Erie, Henry, Marion, Ottawa, Putnam and Ross counties.

HABITAT: In full sun in moist, alluvial or rich soil; frequently in disturbed situations.

HAZARDS: Unknown, but possibly overgrowth by taller species.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but presumed good since it occurs in disturbed habitats.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering or fruiting material is needed for accurate determination.

COMMENTS: This obscure plant may be overlooked due to its small size and weedy appearance. It may be more frequent than the few records indicate. It should be sought in suitable habitats throughout the state. Steyermark (1963) states that it often forms dense flat spreading masses over wet soil.

There is a taxonomic problem with *Euphorbia* subgenus *Chamaesyce*, of which this species is a member. Webster (1967) treats it as *Chamaesyce serpens* (see Synonym).

Contact with the sap of this plant may cause dermatitis similar to that induced by poison ivy.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York. 910 pp.

Steyermark, J.A. 1963. Flora of Missouri. The Iowa State University Press, Ames, IA.
1728 p.

Webster, G.L. 1967. The genera of the Euphorbiaceae in the southeastern United States. J. Arn. Arb. 48: 303-429.

Wheeler, L.C. 1941. *Euphorbia* subgenus *Chamaesyce* in Canada and the United States exclusive of Florida. Rhodora 43: 97-205.



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