

POLYGALA POLYGAMA Walt.
Racemed Milkwort

FAMILY: Polygalaceae

HABIT: Biennial, or possibly perennial herb to 4.5 dm.; flowering June- August; fruiting July-September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Of the Ohio species of *Polygala*, *P. polygama* most closely resembles *Polygala senega*. However, *P. senega* has a stout, woody rhizome, dense racemes of white chasmogamous flowers, and lacks cleistogamous flowers. *P. polygama* lacks a woody rhizome, has loose, spreading racemes of pink chasmogamous flowers, and basal racemes of cleistogamous flowers.

TOTAL RANGE: ME to MI and MN, s. to NJ, w. VA, OH, IN, and IA; also along the coastal plain from e. VA to FL and TX.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Ashtabula, Fulton, Lucas, and Williams counties. Pre-1980 records exist from Cuyahoga and Lake counties.

HABITAT: Open to semi-open situations in dry to moist, usually sandy soil: open woods, woods borders, dunes, banks, and fields.

HAZARDS: Grazing; overshadowing by woody species due to succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but presumed fair due to its occurrence in disturbed habitat.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material is needed for positive identification of this species. If a collection is made, the whole plant, including roots and basal flower racemes, should be taken. Avoid over-collecting.

COMMENTS: This plant has a scattered distribution throughout the interior portion of its total range, and thus could potentially occur throughout Ohio. However, it appears to be limited to the northern part of the state. Its small size, similarity to *P. senega*, and occurrence in disturbed habitats could cause it to be overlooked by botanists. It should be sought in areas of sandy soil throughout northern Ohio.

Some authors divide this species into two varieties. Under this concept, Ohio plants are the var. *obtusata* Chodat. The typical variety occurs to the southeast of Ohio.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Cooperrider, T.S. 1995. The Dicotyledoneae of Ohio. Part 2. Linaceae through Campanulaceae. Ohio State Univ. Press, Columbus, OH. 656 pp.

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