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The Elatinaceae in Iowa

GLENN H. CRUM and JILL E. KNAPP¹

CRUM, GLENN H., and JILL E. KNAPP (Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011). The Elatinaceae in Iowa. Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci. 83(2): 63, 1976. The first record of a

member of the Elatinaceae, *Elatine triandra* Schk., is reported from a marsh in Dickinson County, Iowa.

The Elatinaceae is a small cosmopolitan family of dicotyledons divided into two genera. *Bergia*, a mostly tropical or subtropical genus of about 20 annual or perennial species, has not been reported from the midwest. *Elatine*, a temperate genus of about 20 species of aquatic, amphibious, or terrestrial dwarf annuals, is usually found growing on the bottom of ponds and quiet streams, or on wet shores.

The general form and habit of *Elatine* is greatly influenced by submergence or emergence. Seeds contained in a pod about the size of a pinhead are usually considered the most stable taxonomic characteristic. *Elatine* is so small and inconspicuous it may be overlooked, or presumed to be a juvenile not worthy of collection. *Elatine triandra* Schk. has been collected in Wisconsin, South Dakota, Missouri and Minnesota, as well as in other states not adjacent to Iowa (Fassett 1939). Although we have little doubt that the Elatinaceae is indigenous to Iowa, its inconspicuous nature and the paucity of suitable habitats has caused it to be overlooked.

Elatine triandra was collected from the muddy bottom of a shallow glacial marsh, in Dickinson County, T99N R37W S3 on 22 June 1975, collection number 75-6-22-9. We were collecting charophytes with Drs. John Dodd, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Iowa State University; Arland Hotchkiss, Department of Biology, University of Louisville; and Takashi Sawa, Department of Botany, University of Toronto. *E. triandra* was common in shallow water near the southwestern corner of the marsh, growing among *Chara*, *Nitella*, and *Tolypella*. Voucher specimens will be located in the herbaria of: Iowa State University, University of Northern Iowa, University of Iowa, and Iowa Lakeside Laboratory.

Later, when we were considering the Iowa distribution of this

species, Dr. Robert Hulbary checked the University of Iowa herbarium. Dr. Larry Eilers searched for specimens of the Elatinaceae in the University of Northern Iowa collection, and Mr. Dean Roosa reported to us from Iowa State University. We looked in the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory herbarium. No collections of the Elatinaceae from Iowa were located.

The late Dr. Martin Grant's card file of references to Iowa vascular plants, located in the University of Northern Iowa herbarium, had only one reference to *Elatine triandra* from the literature. Gilly and McDonald (1937) listed: "*Elatine triandra* Schkuhr. Rocky bed of Cedar Creek. Sec. 34. Round Prairie Twp. October 5, 1935 (M3049)." The specimen had been deposited in the Parsons College herbarium, but its present location is unknown. Gilly and McDonald (1948) said that the alleged *E. triandra* from Cedar Creek was a mistaken identification of *Dianthera americana* L., a member of the Acanthaceae.

We wish to thank all of the botanists who have aided in bringing this inconspicuous native species to public attention.

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