Verbascum Phlomides Near Iowa City

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VERBASCUM PHLOMOIDES NEAR IOWA CITY

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At the meeting of Iowa Academy of Science, 1944, Miller presented a short paper on the occurrence of some species of Verbascum in Iowa. The occurrence of V. phlomoides in Johnson County was based in part upon 2 specimens in the State University of Iowa herbarium collected in 1911 by Shimek in "Black's pasture west of city park" Iowa City. "Black's pasture" has long since changed into a residential district in which the writer now lives. One day last June he was genuinely thrilled to find among vacant lots and victory gardens a few specimens of Verbascum phlomoides which might, for sake of continuity, be labeled "Black's pasture 1944".

Two questions immediately arise. Are there other stations around Iowa City? Are there reports of this species from adjoining states? About July 1st two or three short excursions were made in attempt to answer the first. One trip led south, past the city dump and airport. A number of specimens of V. phlomoides were seen, but very few V. Thapsus. The second trip was in the hilly region north of Iowa City. An attempt was made to count specimens. Eleven specimens of V. Thapsus and three of V. phlomoides were counted scattered over about one and a half miles of roadside, and then in a poor pasture were seen a considerable number of V. phlomoides.

The third trip was cut past the village of Coralville. Seven specimens of V. Thapsus and two of V. phlomoides were noted, and then in an overgrazed pasture and old field along the Rock Island railway were hundreds of V. phlomoides, in full bloom, making a solid golden block which could be seen for a quarter mile. Subsequently two small stands of V. Thapsus were found along the Crandic railway in Manville Heights, Iowa City.

There seems to be no doubt that around Iowa City V. phlomoides is numerically much more abundant than V. Thapsus, that either is capable of growing a solid stand, and there is no evidence of hybridization. As to distribution elsewhere; Gray's Manual, 7th edition, and Britton and Brown, 2nd edition, give distribution of Verbascum phlomoides as Massachusetts to Kentucky. Rydberg (1932) includes Iowa in its range, apparently the first published statement of its occurrence here. Muenscher (1935) does not mention it, neither does Small (1933).

Of fairly recent local floras, all of the following include V. Thapsus, but not V. phlomoides: Schaffner, Ohio; Illinois Natural History Survey Manual; Braun, Kentucky: Fasset, Wisconsin; Moyle, Minnesota; Over, South Dakota; Gates, Kansas; Steyermark, Missouri. Deam (1940) reports V. phlomoides for two localities in north central Indiana, while McFarland (1942) includes it in his Kentucky list but without locality. Deam, with his usual care, tells explicitly where it was found, who helped him identify it, and gives key characters.
Some important facts have come out of this brief study, as is nearly always the case when plants are examined in the field. The flowers of *V. phlomoides* are twice the size of those in *V. Thapsus*, as stated by Deam, Rydberg, Britton and Brown, also they are usually broad-lobed, and bright golden yellow. Rydberg, and Britton and Brown give the height of *V. phlomoides* as only 4 feet. Around Iowa City it is as tall or taller than *V. Thapsus*. One to two meters would cover its size range. Deam says the leaves are slightly decurrent, so do Britton and Brown, while Rydberg says not decurrent, and Gray, 7th ed., gives not at all or only slightly decurrent. All agree that *V. Thapsus* has decurrent leaves. The facts are these: *V. Thapsus* has relatively smooth leaves which taper to narrow straight wings, running for some distance down the stem. The leaves of *V. phlomoides* are more rugose, with wavy margins, particularly toward the base. These are joined to the stem by broad, crisped decurrent auricles, which are indeed shorter than the wings of *V. Thapsus*, but which clothe the stem so completely that it seems about three times its actual thickness. Altogether *V. phlomoides* is a more robust, vigorous, leafy plant than *V. Thapsus*, a richer green, flower brighter, very nearly ornamental. There are some European papers on *Verbascum* which the writer has not seen, but it seems probable that the relation of these two species needs further study. The writer suspects that *V. phlomoides* is far more common in the United States than reports indicate.

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