

PLANT NOTES

176/21. *Vicia monantha* Retz. 1783, *Obs. Bot.*, 3, 39; *V. calcarata* Desf., 1799, *Fl. Atlant.*, 2, 166. Recently Burttt and Lewis (1949, *Kew Bull.*, 1949, 497-515) examined the Kew herbarium material of this species by biometric methods, and found support for the long-standing view (Murbeck, 1897, *Contr. Fl. nord-ouest Afr.*, 1, 74-76; Maire, 1932, *Bull. Soc. Hist. nat. Afr. Nord.*, 23, 184; 1940, *ibid.*, 31, 17) that it comprised two segregates differing in size and geographical distribution. These are regarded by most authors as subspecies, and according to Burttt and Lewis they are distinguishable as follows:

	<i>Vicia monantha</i> Retz. :	
	subsp. <i>monantha</i> (subsp. <i>cinerea</i> (Bieb.) Maire)	subsp. <i>triflora</i> (Ten.) Burttt & Lewis
Flowers per inflorescence	(1-2)	(2-4)
Length of standard	10-14.5 mm.	14.5-19 mm.
Length of wings	9-12.5 mm.	14-16.5 mm.
Length of keel	9-11.5 mm.	12-14 mm.
Mature pod	23-33 × 6.8-5 mm.	32-49 × 8.5-12 mm.
Seed, diameter	<3.5 mm.	>3.5 mm.
Seed, colour	brownish	blackish
Distribution	Mainly E. Medit. to India	Near and Middle East

The assignment of Retzius' type to the "smaller" subsp. was made by Burttt and Lewis on rather slender evidence (the type-specimen is inadequate), but under the International Rules it is necessary to assign the subspecific epithet *monantha* to whichever segregate includes the type.

V. monantha has occurred in this country sporadically as an alien, usually associated with grain refuse. I have looked through the material from Britain at Kew, the British Museum, Oxford, and in herb. R. C. L. Burges, and so far as can be determined it is all subsp. *triflora*, or at least there is no unequivocal subsp. *monantha* amongst it. As often happens with adventive aliens, the majority of specimens were so retarded or stunted from growing under unfavourable conditions that biometric measurements were unreliable or impossible. The flower-length is a particularly unsatisfactory character here, since the flowers seem to enlarge rapidly during anthesis, and also since late in the season the plant is prone to produce stunted diminutive flowers. Two plants which I found, in company with Dr. R. C. L. Burges and Messrs. R. Graham, J. E. Lousley, and B. T. Ward, in October 1953 on the rubbish-tip at Barking (v.c. 18) had pods 32-40 × 9 mm., standard (only one flower available, past anthesis) 12 mm. and giving preference to the pod character thus came just inside subsp. *triflora*. Seed from these sown in the garden the following spring germinated readily, and the resultant

plants had the flower standard 15-17 mm. long and mature pods 39-44 × 10-11 mm., leaving no doubt that they fell under subsp. *triflora*. Although the garden-grown plants were robust and healthy, the inflorescences were never more than 1-flowered. The flowers are usually described as "purple"; the present ones were a bright carmine reminiscent of *Lathyrus nissolia*, turning greenish-blue after fertilisation.—D. P. YOUNG.

220/17. *EPILOBIUM PEDUNCULARE* A. Cunn. In 1947 a few small plants of this species appeared in the shrubbery at Parkhill, near Arbroath, v.c. 90, probably imported with ornamental shrubs. At my request these plants were carefully preserved. By the summer of 1954 it was somewhat disconcerting to find that they had multiplied into hundreds, perhaps thousands, of plants covering an area of approximately 50 square yards. All the common weeds had been crowded out with the exception of a few tough plants of *Viola riviniana*. The only other species able to hold its own was another alien, *Mentha requienii*, which had taken possession of a few square feet of ground in competition with the *Epilobium*. The latter is spreading not only by its roots but also by seed, and fresh colonies have been noted within a radius of 150 yards, but so far (curiously perhaps) no further afield.—U. K. DUNCAN.

435/14. *Campanula lactiflora* Bieb., 1808, *Fl. Taur.-Cauc.*, 1, 153. 92, S. Aberdeen; by River Dee at Dess (two places) and Ballater, thoroughly established, 1954, D. McCLENTOCK (Hb. Lousley).

Perennial, stem 90-150 cm., branched above, with a few stiff reflexed hairs. Cauline leaves ovate-lanceolate, 7.5-10 cm. long, serrate, sessile, glabrous except for a few stiff hairs on the nerves beneath, rather pale green. Flowers in a much branched, loose, terminal panicle, usually three on each peduncle. Calyx lobes ovate, acute, veined, hispid. Corolla open campanulate to nearly saucer-shaped, about one inch long, and across. Capsule opening at the base. Caucasus, Armenia, Asia Minor and north Persia.

This ornamental garden plant was introduced in 1814, but is grown more in Scotland than in England. Bieberstein described the colour of the flowers as milky suffused with blue, but in the countries where it is native, and in cultivation, there is much variation and it is sometimes pale blue (as at Ballater) or a much brighter blue (as at Dess). Excellent illustrations will be found in Bieberstein's *Cent. Pl. Rar. Ross.*, 1, t. 10, 1810 and Edwards' *Botanical Register*, 3, t. 241, 1817, but the one in *Bot. Mag.*, t. 1973 is not representative.—J. E. LOUSLEY.

615/37. *Polygonum senegalense* Meisn., 1826, *Mon. gen. Polygoni prodr.*, 54. 37, Worcs.; as a wool adventive in field of beet, Charlton, 1953, Miss C. M. GOODMAN and J. E. LOUSLEY (Hb. Lousley, 53110152).

Stem robust, erect, little branched, glabrous, over 2 metres tall. Leaves shortly petioled, ovate-lanceolate, up to 23 cm. in length, and

7 cm. wide, acute, glabrous except for strigose hairs on the margins and on the nerves on the undersurface. Ochreae large, truncate, not ciliate. Flowers in elongated spike-like raceme. Perianth pink. Native throughout tropical Africa, and extending north to Egypt, and south through temperate Africa to the Cape.

The single plant found superficially somewhat resembled a giant *P. lapathifolium*. It was observed for several weeks by Miss Goodman but no fruits had set by November 1st when specimens were collected. I am grateful to Mr. E. Milne-Redhead for kindly confirming the name so far as is possible on immature material.

J. E. LOUSLEY.

+754(2)/2. *Eriochloa contracta* Hitchc., 1928, *Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.*, **41**, 163. Based on *Helopus mollis* C. Muell., 1861, *Bot. Zeit.*, **19**, 314, non Kunth (1829). 34, W. Glos.; Avonmouth Docks, Bristol, September 1952, Rev. R. B. ABELL, C. W. BANNISTER and C. C. TOWNSEND, det. C. E. HUBBARD. See "Bristol Botany in 1952" (*Proc. Bristol Nat. Soc.*, **28**, 312 (1953).

The genus *Eriochloa* belongs to the tribe *Panicaceae*, of which four other genera—*Panicum*, *Digitaria*, *Echinochloa* and *Setaria*—occur frequently as aliens in Britain. It may be distinguished from all of these and other genera of the *Panicaceae* by the swollen (subglobose) lowest internode of the spikelet which is covered by the minute lower glume. *Setaria* is at once distinguished by the presence of one or more long bristles (modified branchlets) from the spikelet pedicels; *Digitaria* by the flat hyaline margins of the fertile lemma and the somewhat thinner fruit; *Echinochloa* by the frequently awned glumes and sterile lemma and the dense secund racemes which comprise the paniculate inflorescence; *Panicum* by the paniculate inflorescence, not secund as in *Eriochloa*. *Paspalum* is distinguished by having the back of the fertile lemma towards the rachis, not away from it as in *Eriochloa*.

E. contracta is a simple or sparsely branched plant 30-70 cm. tall, with a soft appearance somewhat reminiscent of a *Holcus* sp. when both are beginning to expand their inflorescence. Leaves flat and pubescent; panicle usually less than 15 cm., with villous rachis; spikelets pilose, about 3.5-4 mm. long, falling very easily when ripe. Second glume and sterile lemma acuminate. Fertile lemmas with margins rigid and in-rolled.

Native of the southern and central United States of America (Nebraska to Colorado, Louisiana and Arizona, introduced into Missouri and Virginia, ex Hitchcock).