# A BIOSYSTEMATIC STUDY OF SOME GLYCERIA SPECIES IN BRITAIN\*

# 3. BIOMETRICAL STUDIES

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# INTRODUCTION

The British representatives of section Glyceria are paludal species, they occupy a wide range of habitats and are occasionally found growing together (Hubbard, 1942); nevertheless each shows slightly different ecological tolerances. G. declinata (2n = 20) can grow in turf likely to be trampled and to dry out in summer. G. fluitans (2n = 40) is ubiquitous, and like G. declinata is able to flourish in both acidic and base-rich soils, whereas G. plicata (2n = 40) is intolerant of acid soils. Both G. plicata and G. × pedicellata (2n = 40) are stoloniferous, forming large stands in shallow water. The hybrid flourishes in swift flowing water.

Because these grasses are restricted to paludal habitats they are divided into many small, spatially isolated, local populations which occur in ponds, on mudbanks, or at the bends of rivers and streams. Many populations have minor differences in floral morphology, and they are often very distinct vegetatively. Examples are: a luxuriant form of *G. declinata* sometimes found in humus-rich ponds (Hopedale, Stafford, H.506)<sup>†</sup>, a form of *G. fluitans* in which the palea-apex greatly exceeds the lemma (Broad oak, Monmouth, H.426 and in Herb. Kew), and the *triticea* forms or varieties of *G. fluitans* and *G. plicata*, characterised by simple spiciform inflorescences (H.460, H.423).

Previous authors (Hubbard, 1942; Lambert, 1949; Jungblut, 1953) regard the varieties as ecological forms dependent on habitat conditions and changing with them, and they are not chromosomal races (Borrill, 1956b). Consequently some of these forms were compared in the same environment to see whether their phenotypic differences had a genetic basis.

### MATERIAL

Seeds were collected from 15 populations, the characteristics of which are shown in Table 1. The limits of individual plants were explored in an attempt to ensure that seed was not derived from one clone. The plants raised from this seed formed samples of the potential biotypes in the populations (Baker, 1953). Each will be referred to as a 'race.' The plants were grown in the same environmental conditions from germination, namely 960 ft.-candles fluorescent light for 17 hours at a mean temperature of 28.5°C., with 7 hours darkness at a mean of 18.5°C. When the fourth leaf in each species appeared, a randomised block with three replicates was planted. The blocks were irrigated with a lawn spray.

#### DATA RECORDED

All the measurements were based on homotypes, i.e., organs of similar position and maturity (Pearson, 1901; Gregor *et al.*, 1936). A list of those used is given in Table 2.

\*\* The experimental work for this investigation was carried out in the Botany Department at the University of Leicester.

<sup>\*</sup> Part of a thesis for the degree of Ph.D. of the University of London.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup> Specimen citations are given in the following form: H.506= specimen No. 54506 in Herb. Univ. Leicester.

TABLE 1. Seed parents for garden trial.

Herb.		T	Vice		LT		1	Morphology	ſ	
190.	Race	Locality	County		Habitat	Habit	Leaf	Culm	Lemma	Anthers
G. declin 468	ata A	Malham Beck	64	7.6	Mudbanks in limestone stream	Small, rather spreading	Narrow, tapering towards apex. Pale green, purplish on sheath	Short, slightly curved	4.0—4.5 mm. 3-toothed, occa- sionally lobed at spikelet extremities, nerve tips purple	0·75—1·00 mm. purple
464	В	Malham Cove	64	7.3	Mudbanks at foot of lime- stone cliff	Large, prostrate, 'cup' type	Rather narrow, scarcely tapering, apex abruptly con- tracted, mucronate, slightly glaucous		4.0—4.5 mm., usually 3-toothed, sometimes obscure- ly lobed	0·75—1·00 mm. purple
413	С	Ulverscroft	55	4.6	Gravel bed of small stream	Large, erect	Broad, more or less tapering, occasionally slightly mucronate at apex	Many, long, erect and more or less curved	4·0—4·5 mm., conspicuously 3-toothed	0·8—1·25 mm. purple
427	D	Cadgwith	1		Quarry pond at cliff top	Large, spreading	Somewhat tapering, occa- sionally slightly mucronate at apex, more or less glaucous		4.0—4.5 mm., somewhat acute at apex, 3-toothed	Up to 1.00 mm. purple
506	Е	Hopedale	39	5.4	Muddy pond rich in humus	Very large, massive	Very long and broad, scarcely tapering, apices contracted, abruptly muc- ronate		About 4.0 mm., 3-5 toothed, some- times lobed	0.8 to 1.0 mm. yellow or purple
G. plicat 400	a   F	Fulborn	29	8.2	Chalky soil, bank of clear chalk stream	Slender, stiff, erect, bushy	Rather small, tapering, often folded, rather dark green for species	Many, stiff, and straightly erect	4·0—4·5 mm., rounded or ob- scurely lobed at apex	1·0—1·25 mm. yellow
	G	Breedon	55	6.9	Gravel bed of small stream	Large, spreading	Medium size, more or less tapering	Few, long, lax, spreading, erect	4·0—4·25 mm., rounded or more or less lobed	ca. 1·25 mm. yellow
444	H	Wistow	55	5.3	Edges of pond in marl pit	Erect, bushy	Long and broad, tapering towards apex	Many, long, stiff, straightly erect	4.0—4.5 mm., rounded or lobed, nerves purple- tipped when in fruit	1·0—1·25 mm. yellow

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Herb.		7	Vice		TT-Liter	Morphology					
10.	Race	Locality	County	рп	Habitat	Habit	Leaf	Culm	Lemma	Anthers	
G. plicate 466	a I	Malham	64	7.2	Freshet on limestone	Small, compact	Slender, short, tapering and often folded, purplish on leaf sheaths	Few, geniculately ascending-erect	3·5—4·0 mm., ob- scurely lobed or 3-toothed, scarlet- bordered	ca. 1·0 mm. purple	
423	J	Wittering	32	6.2	Small spring on limestone	Small, spreading	Medium size, more or less tapering ascending		4.0—4.5 mm., more or less rounded, black- tipped in fruit	1·0—1·25 mm. yellow	
G. fluitar	rs K	Breedon	55	6.9	Bed of canal, mud rich in humus	Stiff, $\pm$ erect	Medium size, rather stiff, and often folded, dark green	Spreading, ascending, to erect	ca. 6·0 mm., apices acute and more or less sinuous	ca. 2·0 mm. purple	
454	L	Ulverscroft	55	4.3	Muddy ditch	Large, rather spreading	Long, lax, often flat, rather pale green Long, straight- ascending by pa apex a lobed		6.0—6.5 mm., noticeably exceeded by palea points, apex acute often lobed	2·0—2·5 mm. yellow	
437	М	Loddington	55	5.2	Wet place in fields at Lod- dington Reddish	Large, spreading	Long and more or less folded, later flat. Rather lax, pale or medium green	Long, straight- ascending	6.0-6.5 mm., usually exceeded by palea points, apex acute and smooth	2·0—2·5 mm. yellow or purple	
490	N	Acle	27	4.1	Trodden ground by dike	Small, slender	Stiff, short, often folded and dark green	Few, short	6.0—6.5 mm., equals length of palea, acute, irregularly lobed, nerve-tips blackish	1·5—2·0 mm. yellow or purple	
475	0	Acle	27	3.9	ca. 30 cm. water in dike	Very large, coarse, and stiff	Medium size, stiff, often folded, dark green, black- ish on sheaths	Very long, woody, nodally rooting	5.5—6.0 mm., more or less equals palea, apices smooth or slightly sinuous, acute	ca. 2·0 mm. purple	

TABLE 1.—continued. Seed parents for garden trial.

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### TABLE 2.

Details	of	the	homotypic	characters.
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Measurements averaged to obtain the mean value for each plant. G. declinata, G. fluitans and G. plicata :										
Lemma length	= Lemma of supra-basal floret in terminal spikelet of major pedicel at each node on the first three culms.									
Florets per spikelet	= Number of florets in each spikelet measured.									
Spikelet length $=$ Length of each spikelet measured.										
Culm length	= Length of the three longest culms.									
Panicle length	= Length of the panicle in each culm measured.									
Number of internodes	= The internodes of each panicle.									
Emergence date	= Interval from germination up to the emergence of the second culm.									
Leaf length	= Length and width of the three longest leaves on the three longest culms and tillers									
Leaf width $\int$	(The averages of the culm leaves and tiller leaves used separately).									
Leaf index	$= \text{Ratio} \frac{\text{Mean leaf length}}{\text{Mean leaf width}}$									
Number of culms	= Total number of culms on the plant.									
Number of shoots	= Total number of shoots on the plant.									
Dry weight	= Weight of the whole plant excluding the root system.									
For G. plicata only:										
Major tillers	= Number of long stolons on the plant.									
Major tiller length	= Length of these stolons.									
Crown tillers	= Number of vegetative shoots at the crown of the plant.									
Secondary tillers	= Number of tillers borne on each culm.									
Tiller number	= Number of tillers borne on each stolon.									

In the case of the consistently stolon-forming G. plicata, with both heading and non-heading plants, these two forms were considered separately as follows:—

In the heading plants the numbers of short vegetative shoots at the centre, and of secondary tillers borne on the culms; in the non-heading, the number and length of the long stolons, and number of short vegetative shoots at the centre, and of secondary tillers borne on the stolons.

At the end of the experiment, the plants themselves were lifted (leaving the roots in situ), partially dried and stored; before measurement, leaves were floated on a detergent solution to restore their normal size.

The data were subjected to an analysis of variance, and the homotype-means for all the races are shown in Table 3, where differences significant at P = 0.01 are indicated.

### DISCUSSION

Highly significant differences were shown by the population samples grown in the same environment (Table 3); consequently there are genetic differences between them. In general, they retained the characteristic morphological features of the parental populations.

The numerical differences between the homotypes give precision to visible variations between the races. Ideographs (Fig. 1), based on the suggestion of Anderson (1949), have been prepared for each population sample, consisting of (1) a base representing the vegetative part of the plant and (2) an erect portion showing the culm, with leaf and spikelet homotypes. The height of the leaf from the base is proportional to the interval between sowing and heading.

Character		Mean values						
	A	В	С	D	E			
G. declinata Florets per spikelet Spikelet length (mm.) Culm length (cm.) Panicle length (cm.) Number of internodes Emergence date Leaf length (mm.) Leaf width (mm.) Leaf index $\frac{\text{Length}^1}{\text{Breadth}}$ Total culms Total shoots Dry weight (gm.)	$\begin{array}{c} 6.27\\ (\underline{15.0})\\ 47.6\\ [23.2]\\ 10.5\\ 29/7\\ (77.7)\\ [5.91]\\ 13.0\\ (15.1)\\ 154.0\\ (\underline{24.2})\end{array}$	$(\overline{7\cdot87})$ 16·4 (52·9) (27·5) [11·3] 5/8 96·2 (6·66) [14·5] (12·9) 175·0 37·5	$(\overline{7\cdot09})$ 14·3 (52·4) 24·2 (11·8) 27/7 (72·7) [5·99] (12·0) 41·2 (116·0) ( <u>30·7</u> )	$(7\cdot37) \\ (15\cdot2) \\ (50\cdot5) \\ [24\cdot0] \\ [11\cdot2] \\ 20/7 \\ (76\cdot3) \\ (6\cdot43) \\ (11\cdot9) \\ 24\cdot9 \\ (\underline{111\cdot0}) \\ 17\cdot1 \\ (11\cdot1) \\ (11$	$(7.73) \\ (15.4) \\ (51.7) \\ (28.0) \\ (11.8) \\ 1/8 \\ 105.4 \\ [7.09] \\ [14.7] \\ (11-6) \\ (132.0) \\ (28.8) \\ (28.8)$			
	F	G <sup>2</sup>	$H^2$	<i>I</i> <sup>2</sup>	J			
G. plicata Florets per spikelet Spikelet length (mm.) Culm length (cm.) Panicle length (cm.) Leaf length (mm.) Leaf width (mm.) Leaf index Length <sup>1</sup> Breadth Number of culms Total shoots Dry weight (gm.) Total major tillers Length major tillers Crown tillers Secondary tillers Mean tiller number	$\begin{array}{c} 8.09\\ 16.3\\ 69.3\\ (24.9)\\ [104.3]\\ (6.20)\\ (16.0)\\ 21.6\\ 92.1\\ 31.2\\ \\ \\ \hline \\ (\overline{51.8})\\ 23.4\\ \\ \\ \hline \\ \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \\ \\ (142.9) \\ 7.45 \\ 18.9 \\ \\ (165.9) \\ (53.1) \\ (12.8) \\ 90.6 \\ (62.3) \\ \\ (\underline{7.14}) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c}$		8·61 17·8 79·4 (24·7) [109·5] (6·25) (17·3) 42·3 (153·0) (52·8)  (69·6) 41·3 			
C. Avitana	K	L	M	N	0			
Lemma length (mm.) Florets per spikelet Spikelet length (mm.) Culm length (cm.) Panicle length (cm.) Number of internodes Emergence date Leaf length (mm.) Leaf width (mm.) Leaf index Length <sup>1</sup> Breadth Total culms Total shoots Due in let (mm.)	$\begin{bmatrix} 5 \cdot 86 \\ 10 \cdot 10 \\ (24 \cdot 5) \\ (62 \cdot 7) \\ [29 \cdot 5] \\ 9 \cdot 68 \\ 17 / 7 \\ (126 \cdot 6) \\ (\underline{6 \cdot 33}) \\ [20 \cdot 1] \\ 24 \cdot 3 \\ (97 \cdot 1) \\ 21 \cdot 1 \end{bmatrix}$	$ \begin{array}{c} (6\cdot39)\\ 11\cdot20\\ (25\cdot9)\\ 75\cdot3\\ \hline [27\cdot1]\\ -\\ 8/8\\ 217\cdot5\\ \hline [7\cdot99]\\ (27\cdot1)\\ \hline [8\cdot0]\\ \hline [76\cdot7]\\ \hline [76\cdot7]\\ \hline [70,0]\\ \end{array} $	$(6\cdot24)$ 12·42 (25·4) (64·8) [28·0] - 14/8 197·5 [7·49] (26·3) [8·14] [8+9] [4(-2)]	(6.42) 9.16 20.80 59.30 22.90 9.50 12/7 (127.5) (6.65) [19.1] (14.84) 55.4 (6.6)	$ \begin{bmatrix} 5 \cdot 73 \\ 8 \cdot 48 \\ 18 \cdot 0 \\ 71 \cdot 9 \\ \hline 31 \cdot 6 \\ 11 \cdot 64 \\ 18 / 7 \\ 158 \cdot 5 \\ (7 \cdot 03) \\ 22 \cdot 8 \\ (14 \cdot 42) \\ (105 \cdot 1) \\ (105 \cdot 1) \end{bmatrix} $			

 TABLE 3.

 The occurrence of significant differences between race means.

Unbracketed figures differ from all others. Figures in like brackets similar. Bracketed figures <u>underlined</u> or barred differ. All differences significant at P = 0.01.

1. A 't' test. 2. Plants almost or entirely non-heading.



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The main differences between the populations are shown in Fig. 1. In *Glyceria* declinata and *G. plicata*, plant bulk is the main feature, measured by dry weight and number of culms and shoots (i, j and k); floral differences are less pronounced.

Race E of G. declinata retained the luxuriant habit characteristic of the parent population, and, with race B, is a distinct type characterised by large vegetative and floral parts. The leaves are long, broad and conspicuously mucronate (Fig. 3), those on the vegetative shoots being significantly longer than those on the culms, as shown below.

Race	Character	Type of shoot	Mean (mm.)	Diff. (mm.)	Minimum significant numerical difference (P = 0.01)
В	Leaf length	Tiller Culm	10·71 9·63	1.09	0.471
E	Leaf length	Tiller Culm	<b>11·75</b> 10·41	1.34	0.865

Analysis of variance, leaf morphology

In Glyceria plicata, grown, like the other species, without low-temperature treatment, two races headed, two did not, and race G was intermediate in behaviour. This is interesting, since Lambert (1949) considered that delay of flowering until the second season distinguished G. plicata from the other British species of section Glyceria. In fact, the position is more complex.

Fig. 1 shows that the non-heading plants made more growth and that races H and I are opposite in habit, the former being very spreading with long, broad leaves (Fig. 3) and the latter with a tufted crown and short stolons. A difference was seen between the parents and offspring of race H. In the field these were slender, erect, floriferous plants resembling race F. The larger size and increased vigour of the progeny are due to suppression of heading.

Homotype correlation was studied by means of scatter diagrams. An example is the relation between spikelet length and number of florets in *Glyceria fluitans*. Fig. 1 and the histograms in Fig. 2 show that these are closely correlated, whereas lemma length is independent.

The homotypes fall into three correlation groups (Fig. 1) :--

1. Those concerned with the size of the vegetative parts of the shoots, i.e. culm length, panicle length, number of internodes per panicle, leaf length, leaf width.

2. Those providing a measure of plant bulk i.e. dry weight and number of shoots.

3. The spikelet characters.

Quite strict correlation is the rule within a population but there are departures from this when passing from one population to another. The fact that populations tend to have independent centres of variation enhances their phenotypic distinctness. A similar situation has been described in *Panicum virgatum* by Nielson (1944).

In G. fluitans (Fig. 1) the differences between the races are in spikelet – (Fig. 2), leaf – (Fig. 3), and culm – length, in contrast to the other species, where bulk was most important. Races L and M are similar with spreading habit, long, lax, flat, pale green leaves, and large spikelets. Race N, at the other extreme, was compact, with short, stiff,

dark green and more or less folded leaves, and short spikelets with very long lemmas. One local population sample, an extreme form of *G. fluitans* var. *triticea* from an acid pool at Great Close Mire, Malham, Mid West York (H.460), was grown alongside the others and retained the varietal form. It was not analysed statistically. The characteristics of this population have a genetic basis.

The large differences in lemma-length in this species are interesting when considering G. fluitans var. islandica Löve (1951), largely because of its short lemmas (mean 5.9 mm., range 5.3-6.4 mm.). The British material studied by Löve had a range of 6.3-7.6 mm. Fig. 2, however, shows that races K and O have short lemmas very similar in range to var. islandica (5.4-6.4 mm., mean 5.86 mm., in race K; and 5.2-6.2, mean 5.73 mm., in race O). This variety is therefore to a large extent paralleled by British material.

Glyceria fluitans has a greater range of variation in race means for spikelet and leaf homotypes than the other species (Fig. 1). This is shown for leaf index in Fig. 3, and for spikelet characters of G. declinata and G. fluitans in Table 4. The existence of a greater range of race-means in G. fluitans could be due to greater variability or to accidents



Fig. 2. Spikelet characteristics in five races of *Glyceria fluitans*. The three characters illustrated show a wide range of variation. Spikelet length and number of florets per spikelet are closely correlated. Lemma length varies independently.

of sampling, since it is possible that another five populations could show a smaller range of variation. The intrinsic variability therefore was studied.

The standard deviation is generally used to measure variation and this is expressed as a percentage of the mean, and the resulting coefficient used as an index of phenotypic variation. For this to be reliable, an increase in the mean must be accompanied by a proportional increase in the standard deviation. Day & Fisher (1937) pointed out that there is no logical reason for this, and evolved the more complex analysis of covariance which has been used in population studies by Gregor & Lang (1950), and Baker (1953).



Fig. 3. Leaf morphology.

Variation in leaf morphology in Glyceria species. Differences significant at P = 0.01 occur between BE: CD: A, FJH: G: I, KN: LM: O, in leaf index, which is a measure of leaf shape. G. declinata has the least range of variation, 2.8 units, G. plicata a greater range, 6.4 units, and G. fluitans the largest range, 8.0 units.

		G.	declinat		G. fluitans							
Characters			Race			Range	ange Race					Range
	A	В	С	D	Е		к	L	М	N	0	
Lemma length Spikelet length No. of florets	4·73 15·00	4∙87 16•36	4·58 14·32	4·84 15-22	4·72 15·43	0·29 1·36	5.86 24.50	6·39 25·90	6·24 25·40	6·42 20·80	5·73 18·00	0·69 7·90
per spikelet	6•27	7.87	7.09	7.37	7.73	1.60	10.10	11-20	12.42	9.16	8.48	3.94

TABLE 4. Range of subpopulation means in Glyceria species.

The standard deviations of the races of *Glyceria* were therefore plotted against the means in order to see whether they were related. Fig. 4 illustrates the results for spikelet-length in *G. fluitans* and *G. declinata*; for lemma-length in *G. fluitans*, and for the species as a whole, based on the pooled data of the races.



Fig. 4. Relation between mean and standard deviation in G. fluitans and G. declinata. Race letters : G. fluitans K L M N O; G. declinata A B C D E. Symbols for species : D = G. declinata ; P = G. plicata ; F = G. fluitans ; XP = G.  $\times$  pedicellata.

Character	Species	Details of data	Population <sup>1</sup> mean (mm.)	Standard deviation (σ)	(per cent) Coefficient of variation
Lemma length	G. plicata	Pooled	4.45	0.175	4.06
0	-	Most variable Race $J$	4.51	0.189	4.18
,, ,,	G. declinata	Pooled	4.73	0.200	4.22
		Most variable Race D	4.84	0.232	4•79
,, ,,	G. fluitans	Pooled	6.21	0.402	6.48
		Least variable Race O	5.73	0.345	6.07
,, ,,	G. $\times$ pedicellata <sup>2</sup>	Pooled	5.47	0.434	8.11
Spikelet length	G. declinata	Pooled	15.26	0.872	6.57
		Most variable Race $B$	16.36	1.166	7.12
,, ,,	G. fluitans	Pooled	22.89	3.967	17.31
	-	Least variable Race $O$	18.00	2·491	<u>13·83</u>

TABLE 5. Coefficients of variation in Glyceria.

1. All differences between species significant at P = 0.01

2. Data from specimens in Herb. University of Leicester.

The coefficients of variation for lemma-length, given in Table 5, based on the pooled data, show that G. *fluitans* is the most variable species; and this is confirmed by the fact that the coefficient of variation for the least variable race of G. *fluitans* exceeds the coefficient of variation for the most variable races of the other species.

The vegetatively propagated hybrid,  $G. \times pedicellata$ , has a similar ecological distribution to the sexually-reproduced species, but a very different genetic population-structure, and it is therefore impossible to carry out sampling on a comparable basis. Data for lemma-length were therefore collected from a random selection of herbarium specimens. The results are shown for comparison in Table 5.  $G. \times pedicellata$  has a smaller meanlemma-length than G. fluitans but a larger standard deviation and therefore the highest coefficient of variation. In the first paper of this series (Borrill 1956a), it was concluded that  $G. \times pedicellata$  had a greater range of phenotypic variation than either parent in panicle characters; the present data suggest that it might also have a higher variability.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. The small, spatially isolated, local populations sampled have many statistically significant phenotypic differences which show that underlying genetic differences exist.

2. In one population of G. fluitans var. triticea, the varietal type of morphology was found to have a genetic basis.

3. G. fluitans var. islandica Löve is similar to two British populations of G. fluitans with short lemmas.

4. The phenotypic characters fall into three correlation groups : those concerned with the dimensions of the vegetative parts, those providing a measure of plant bulk, and the spikelet characters. Lemma-length was independent.

5. G. fluitans is more variable than G. declinata and G. plicata.

6. In an earlier paper (Borrill 1956a),  $G. \times pedicellata$  was shown to have a greater range of variation than either parental species; the present data suggest that it may have a greater variability. The evidence obtained is not conclusive, because population-sampling could not be put on the same basis in parents and hybrid.

7. All the populations of *G. declinata* and *G. fluitans* studied headed in the first season, whereas, in *G. plicata*, two of the populations headed in the first season, two remained non-heading, and one was intermediate. All the seed- and population-plants were without low temperature treatment.

8. There was no obvious relation between the nature and extent of morphological differentation in the populations examined and the type of habitat in which they grew. The implications of this will be discussed in a further paper.

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