

***Crepis pulchra* (Asteraceae) and *Moenchia erecta* (Caryophyllaceae) in Illinois**

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of the Eurasian weeds *Crepis pulchra* L. (Asteraceae) and *Moenchia erecta* (L.) Gaertn., Mey. & Scherb. (Caryophyllaceae) are reported in Illinois for the first time. A key to the Illinois species of *Crepis* is provided.

INTRODUCTION

During botanical exploration of southern Illinois in 1993 two taxa of vascular plants were found which were not previously reported for the state. The two taxa, *Crepis pulchra* L. (Asteraceae) and *Moenchia erecta* (L.) Gaertn., Mey. & Scherb. (Caryophyllaceae) are both Eurasian weeds that were found in disturbed habitats. The collection of *Moenchia* vouchers a new genus for Illinois. Acronyms for herbaria used in this paper follow Holmgren *et al.* (1990).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SPECIMEN: *Crepis pulchra* L. Illinois. Alexander County. Southwest of Unity along State Route 3 at east entrance to Horseshoe Lake Conservation Area. SE 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 11, T16S, R2W. Roadside. 20 May 1993. David Ketzner & Mark Basinger 1493 (ILLS, ISM); South of Unity along State Route 127. SE 1/4, NE 1/4, sec. 12, T16S, R2W. Roadside. 31 May 1993. David Ketzner & Mark Basinger 1506 (ILLS, ISM); North of Unity along State Route 127. SE 1/4, SE 1/4, sec. 25, T15S, R2W. Roadside. 31 May 1993. David Ketzner & Mark Basinger 1508 (ILLS, ISM, SIU).

Crepis pulchra is locally established in waste places in the United States from Virginia to Ohio and Indiana, southward to Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana (Cronquist, 1980; Gleason and Cronquist, 1991). In states adjacent to Illinois it is apparently uncommon. Deam (1940) reports it as a roadside weed from Jefferson County in Indiana. In Missouri it is known from a freight yard in St. Louis County (Steyermark, 1963). Browne and Athey (1992) report it from the Mississippian Plateau and Bluegrass Regions of Kentucky.

At the Illinois sites, all on roadsides, *C. pulchra* is associated with common weeds such as *Festuca pratensis* Huds., *Bromus commutatus* Schrad., *Melilotus alba* Desr., *M. officinalis* (L.) Lam., *Campsis radicans* (L.) Seem., *Vicia cracca* L., and *Trifolium campestre* Schreb.

Until this report, two species of *Crepis* were known from Illinois, both from northeastern counties (Mohlenbrock, 1986). The following key is provided to distinguish *C. pulchra* from the other Illinois species.

KEY TO *CREPIS* IN ILLINOIS

1. Inner involucral bracts pubescent within; mature achenes dark purplish-brown *C. tectorum* L.
1. Inner involucral bracts glabrous within; mature achenes pale 2
2. Involucre entirely glabrous, 8-12 mm high; achenes 4-6 mm long *C. pulchra* L.
2. Involucre pubescent on outer surface, 5-8 mm high; achenes 1.5-2.5 mm long *C. capillaris* (L.) Wallr.

Crepis pulchra is the only Illinois species in the genus with entirely glabrous involucral bracts.

SPECIMEN: *Moenchia erecta* (L.) Gaertn., Mey. & Scherb. Illinois. Clay County. Charley Brown Park, west of Flora. NE 1/4, NW 1/4, sec. 33, T3N, R6E. Lawn. 17 May 1993. David Ketzner 1487 (ILLS, ISM, MICH).

In Illinois, *M. erecta* would most likely be confused with *Sagina decumbens* (Ell.) Torr. & Gray which it somewhat resembles with its wiry habit. In *S. decumbens* flowers are pentamerous and styles are alternate with the sepals. *M. erecta* has tetramerous flowers and styles opposite the sepals (Clapham, 1964). Also the capsule of *Moenchia* opens by eight short, revolute teeth, while in *Sagina* the capsule opens by four-five valves. In the British Isles *M. erecta* is known as "upright chickweed" (Clapham *et al.*, 1962).

Moenchia erecta is apparently rather rare in North America. Britton (1901) reported it in waste grounds near Philadelphia and Baltimore. It has more recently been collected in Oregon (Peck, 1961), British Columbia (Szcawinski and Harrison, 1972), California (Taylor and Ahart, 1983), and South Carolina (Rabeler, 1991). At the Illinois site *M. erecta* occurs in a lawn in a city park that is frequently mowed. The lawn is dominated by *Festuca pratensis* Huds., *Poa pratensis* L., and *Trifolium dubium* Sibth. Other common associates are *Plantago lanceolata* L., *P. pusilla* Nutt., *P. virginica* L., *Dactylis glomerata* L., *Galium pedemontanum* (Bellardi) All., *Hedyotis crassifolia* Raf., *Cerastium vulgatum* L., *Trifolium repens* L., *Veronica arvensis* L., and *Rumex acetosella* L.

The Illinois collection site is very near the Clay County Fairgrounds where farm animals are displayed yearly. The lawn where *M. erecta* was collected is used as a parking area for vehicles and animal trailers during the fair. *Moenchia erecta* may have been introduced at this site from the fur of farm animals or possibly from hay used as bedding or fodder. Rabeler (1991) speculates that *M. erecta* arrived at the South Carolina station, which is near a former wool combing mill, in imported wool.

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