

August 2018 Plant



Lindernia dubia (L.) Pennell var. *dubia*, Short-stalked or yellow seeded false pimpernel

The August *Plant of the Month* is a small herbaceous annual found on muddy shore and wet ground. False pimpernel is a member of the Scrophulariaceae or the figwort family. It is widespread in New Jersey, found throughout the northern counties, the Inner Coastal Plain and Cape May. It is not a plant of the Pine Barrens. It is often seen on the edges of wet farmland, freshwater tidal marshes, and puddles, all areas of disturbance. It appears false pimpernel prefers recent disturbances to perpetuate its annual life cycle.

The plants are small. They can be simple to branched, upright to depressed or ascending. Fernald (1950) provides size descriptions ranging between 0.5 to 3.5 dm. The plants presented in the photo above are depressed, decumbent stems with bracteal leaves rounded at the tip, creeping in soft mud. These plants fit the description for variety *inundata* Pennell. Pennell described this variety for freshwater tidal marshes and similar adjacent habitats.

False pimpernel seems to either have been missed by Native Americans or lumped with other small succulent herbs, which is probably the case. A friend once told me a story of Native Americans picking berries in Labrador, thinking they could help him separate the myriad of berries growing on the tundra. He approached two pickers, stated to chat and asked what the names of the items they were picking. They said "berries." Any type? They said blue,.... and sometimes red. Some much for local details!

Lindernia dubia is in flower now and will be for the next few weeks. Keep your eyes peeled for that small blue flower along wetland trails and farm fields.

JRA, 7/2018