

2019 April *Guess that Plant*



Rumex obtusifolius L., Bitter Dock

The April *Guess that Plant* was another non-native plant: bitter dock. This herbaceous species is a member of the Polygonaceae, the Buckwheat Family. It is a native of Northern Europe and has become naturalized in North America. Its common name attests to its edibility, but it also identifies its palatability as bitter. Mary Hough (1983) lists the plant as common in the Northern Counties, and the plant becomes less common on the Inner Coastal Plain. It is absent from the Pine Barrens, except as a waif plant. I often find this species of dock in the Southern Counties where human disturbance has left its mark, such as an old home site, farm field edges, mowed roadsides, intercity vacant lots, or atop piles of rubble. The photo illustrates its broad leaves, with a lobed leaf base, and reticulate leaf texture. Most members of the genus *Rumex* have colored stems, such as the red veins and upper stems found on this specimen.

JRA 4/2019