

April 2023 Plant of the Month



Xanthium strumarium L., Rough Cocklebur

April's *Plant of the Month* is a native annual composite that has adapted to the anthropogenic landscape created by human activity. Rough cocklebur has its native habitat on the edges of salt marshes, dunes, and sandy areas near the estuarine environment. This species has adapted to the modern landscape by becoming a weed in farm fields throughout the State. Mary Hough (1983) identified vouchers specimens for nearly all New Jersey counties.

Our Plant of the Month is a member of the Asteraceae or Compositae, the Daisy or Composite family. This is a very large family supports many genera including our Plant of the Month. Depending on the authority, there are either three varieties of our Plant of the Month defined by differences in the fruit (var. *canadense*, var. *glabratum*, var. *strumarium*), or one species seen as polymorphic. There are two *Xanthium* species known from New Jersey. The second species is the non-native *Xanthoum spinosum*. It was formerly collected from ballast piles in Camden and Middlesex county. the other species being.

Cocklebur has been used by Native Americans for medicine and food (Moerman, 1998).

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