

YELLOW (CURLY) DOCK

Genus/species	<i>Rumex crispus</i>
Family	Polygonaceae
Distribution	Throughout US except S Florida; naturalized from Europe
Comments	This common perennial weed makes its appearance in early spring, and its typically-unbranched flowering stem or stalk may grow to be over five feet tall. Its leaves, which may reach a foot in length and three inches wide at the bottom of the plant but usually smaller along the stem, typically have a crinkled or curled edge suggestive of cooked bacon. The leaves at the base of the plant have a petiole but those along the stem lack this. The flowers are in clusters on the stem, and are initially greenish but become reddish; the fruit ripen to a dark brown. The dried stems persist in fields where their dark color contrasts with the lighter color of dried grasses and other plants. Flowering is usually in mid-spring and the pollen is dispersed by the wind. Curly Dock usually grows in moist ditches or along streams. The plant is sometimes used as a folk medicine although it contains considerable quantities of oxalic acid.

