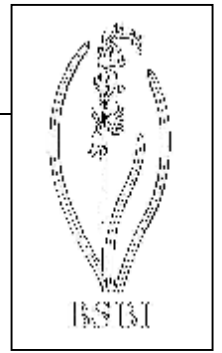


Plant Crib



PHYTOLACCA

The *Phytolacca* species recorded from Britain have been discussed by Clement (1982). *Phytolacca acinosa sensu lato* (i.e. including *P. esculenta* and *P. latbenia*) is the plant most frequently encountered, and the other taxa are rare casuals. Old records for *P. americana* require verification as all may be errors.

Specimens can be named from the key below, modified from Clement (1982). Floral parts should be counted in several blooms to avoid atypical examples. Plants in late summer become entirely suffused with purple throughout; late flowers thus are also purple leading to possible misidentifications.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Pedicels 0-3 mm; plants to 0.6 m tall | <i>P. octandra</i> L. |
| 1 | Pedicels 4.5-10 mm; plants 0.9-3 m tall | 2 |
| 2 | Carpels free to their base | 3 |
| 2 | Carpels united up to the styles (best seen in fresh specimens) | 5 |
| 3 | Stamens 10-16; perianth uniformly light green | <i>P. latbenia</i> (Buch.-Ham.) H. Walter |
| 3 | Stamens(7-)8(-9); perianth white or greenish-white | 4 |
| 4 | Pedicels and inflorescence axis almost glabrous; perianth normally white; anthers rose-purple | <i>P. esculenta</i> Van Houtte |
| 4 | Pedicels and inflorescence axis scabrid-glandular; perianth greenish-white to pinkish; anthers white | <i>P. acinosa</i> Roxb. |
| 5 | Carpels 10; plant 1.2-3 m tall; inflorescence drooping at tip, more so in fruit; flowers greenish-white | <i>P. americana</i> L. |
| 5 | Carpels 7-9(-10); plant 0.9-1.5 m tall; inflorescence stiffly erect, remaining so in fruit; flowers always purple-rose | <i>P. polyandra</i> Batalin |

Reference Clement, E. J. (1982). *BSBI News* **32**: 22-23.

Author E. J. Clement, December 1997.