

CHENOPODIACEAE – GOOSEFOOT FAMILY

Plant: herbs, shrubs or trees – often called weeds

Stem: often ridged or angled

Root: sometimes with taproot

Leaves: mostly alternate (rarely opposite), simple or sometimes reduced, usually toothed or lobed, sometimes with a mealy-like (hairs) or flaky surface; no stipules

Flowers: perfect or imperfect (monoecious or dioecious); small, usually in clusters on spikes or axils; often green; with bracts, sepals usually 1-5 or none and often present with fruit; no petals; usually 5 stamens; carpels 2 or 3; 1-3 styles, usually 2

Fruit: tiny nut or dry seed (often need for ID)

Other: world wide but likes alkaline soils; Swiss chard, spinach, beets;
Dicotyledons Group

Genera: 100+ genera; locally – *Atriplex*, *Chenopodium* (goosefoot), *Corispermum* (Bugseed), *Cycloloma* (winged pigweed), *Salicornia* (glasswort), *Salsola* and others

Flower Morphology in the Chenopodiaceae (Goosefoot Family)

A large group, complex and sometimes difficult to ID

Examples of common genera



Desert Holly
Atriplex hymenelytra (Torr.) S. Watson



Lamb's-Quarters [Pigweed]
Chenopodium album L.



Strawberry Blite [Blite Goosefoot]
Chenopodium capitatum (L.) Asch.

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Mapleleaf Goosefoot; *Chenopodium simplex* (Torr.) Raf.

Desert Holly

Atriplex hymenelytra (Torr.) S. Watson
Chenopodiaceae (Goosefoot Family)
Red Rock Canyon National Conservation
Area, Clarke County, Nevada



Notes: shrub (saltbush); flowers greenish in mostly crowded terminal spikes; leaves often deltoid (to somewhat ovate), several sharp teeth, white to silver-gray (Holly-like); stem rough and gnarly; fruit red altering to yellow; winter to spring

[V Max Brown, 2014]



Lamb's-Quarters [Pigweed]

Chenopodium album L.

Chenopodiaceae (Goosefoot Family)

Maumee River Metroparks,

Lucas County, Ohio

Notes: flowers greenish in crowded spikes, 5 sepals (no petals), mealy hairy; note lower leaf shape below, upper leaf more lanceolate; much branched plant, stem sometimes pigmented (reddish); common plant with several varieties; summer to fall

[V Max Brown, 2005]



Lower Leaf



Strawberry Blite [Blite Goosefoot]



Chenopodium capitatum (L.) Asch.

Chenopodiaceae (Goosefoot Family)

Grand Lake area, Grand County, Colorado

Notes: flowers deep red, small, in crowded rounded clusters or spikes, 3-5 fleshy sepals (no petals); leaves alternate, triangular often with a slight cordate base, entire to wavy toothed, well stalked; stem sometimes pigmented (reddish), mostly smooth; fruit a black seed; summer

[V Max Brown, 2012]



Mapleleaf Goosefoot

Chenopodium simplex (Torr.) Raf.

Chenopodiaceae (Goosefoot Family)

Springfield area, Greene County, Missouri

Notes: flowers greenish in mostly leafless crowded terminal spikes, 5 sepals (no petals), +/- mealy; leaves often deltoid (to somewhat ovate), sharp tip, 1-5+ large teeth; plant not aromatic; summer to fall

[V Max Brown, 2007]

