



Maine Department of Conservation  
Natural Areas Program

*Chenopodium rubrum* L. var. *rubrum*

Coast-blite Goosefoot

**Habitat:** Saltmarshes or saline soils. [Tidal wetland (non-forested, wetland)]

**Range:** Newfoundland to Washington, south to New England, New Jersey, and west to southern California. Considered rare in New Brunswick and New Hampshire, but not southward.

**Phenology:** Flowers August - November; fruits September on.

**Family:** Amaranthaceae

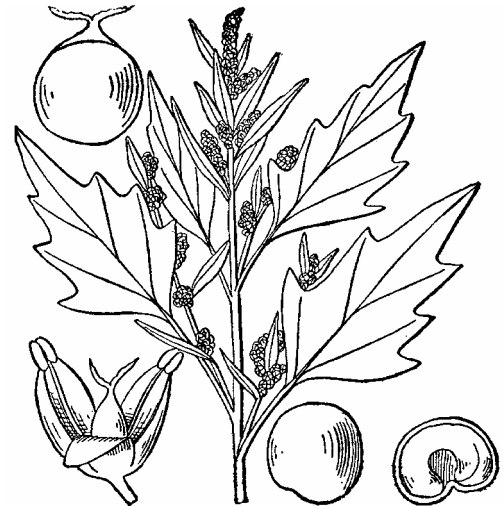


Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

**Aids to Identification:** Resembles the common garden weed lamb's-quarters (*C. album*, an introduced species), with narrow spikes of green flowers rising out of the leaf axils. Coast-blite goosefoot, however, has leaves which are green on both sides (as opposed to the whitish leaf undersides of lamb's-quarters) and which are coarsely toothed. *C. rubrum* var. *rubrum*'s name derives from the reddish color of the late-season leaves and fruits, coloration that can also occur in *C. album*. Another relative found in similar habitats, orach (*Atriplex patula*), has leaves which are entire except for two lobes at the base. *C. rubrum* var. *rubrum* is closely related to the introduced *C. rubrum* var. *humile*. *C. rubrum* var. *rubrum* is upright, with toothed lower leaves and achenes 0.5-0.6 mm long; *C. rubrum* var. *humile* is spreading with the lower leaves entire and with the achenes 0.8-1.0 mm long.

**Ecological characteristics:** Can grow either on sandy frontal dunes or, less commonly, in grass- or sedge-dominated marshes back from the shore. Common dune associates include sea rocket (*Cakile edentula*), orach (*Atriplex patula*), sea-beach sandwort (*Honckenya peploides*), etc..

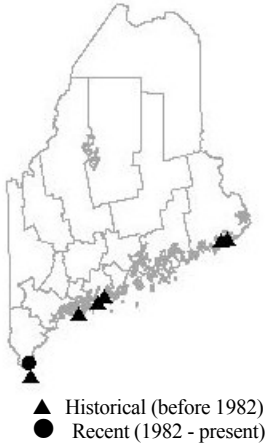
**Synonyms:** Introduced *Chenopodium humile* is now considered a variety of *C. rubrum*.

**Rarity of *Chenopodium rubrum* var. *rubrum***

|                          |                  |   |
|--------------------------|------------------|---|
| <b>State Rank:</b>       | S1               | Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity or vulnerability to extirpation.  |
| <b>New England Rank:</b> | Division<br>3:ME | Locally rare plant: Not rare throughout New England, but Maine occurrences are disjunct or ecologically anomalous from the rest of its New England range. |
| <b>Global Rank:</b>      | G5               | Demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure globally.   |

**Status of *Chenopodium rubrum* var. *rubrum***

|                               |            |  |
|-------------------------------|------------|--|
| <b>Federal Status:</b>        | None       | No Federal Status.   |
| <b>State Status:</b>          | Threatened |  |
| <b>Proposed State Status:</b> | Threatened | Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened. Listing criteria met: Few individuals, Special habitat, At edge of range |



**Known Distribution in Maine:**

This rare plant has been documented from a total of 6 town(s) in the following county(ies): Lincoln, Washington, York.

**Dates of documented observations are:** 1947, 1977 (2), 1980 (2), 1983, 1992

**Reason(s) for rarity:**

Unclear; perhaps overlooked; near northern end of its range.

**Conservation considerations:**

Need more information; populations could be threatened by heavy recreational use.

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The information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 12 MAY 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species, please contact the Natural Areas Program  
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

