# NEW TO OKLAHOMA: MURDANNIA KEISAK (COMMELINACEAE)

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper documents the occurrence of a vascular plant taxon previously unknown to the flora of Oklahoma. *Murdannia keisak*, an Asian member of the Commelinaceae, was discovered in the Mountain Fork River in southeastern McCurtain County.

KEY WORDS: Murdannia, Commelinaceae, Oklahoma, McCurtain County, exotic

Murdannia keisak (Hassk.) Hand.-Mazz. (Commelinaceae; watermoving herb) is a weedy annual forb native to eastern Asia (Faden 2000; Seward 1958). In North America it was first reported in 1935 from South Carolina (Hotchkiss 1940, 1951), although the New York Botanic Garden herbarium has a Louisiana collection from 1927 (Dunn & Sharitz 1990a). It has since been found throughout the southeastern USA, as well as in Oregon and in Washington, where it is listed as a noxious weed (BONAP 2013; USDA, NRCS 2013; Washington Administrative Code 2005). Murdannia keisak has also been found in Europe (Faden 2000). The collections reported here are the first for the state of Oklahoma (Hoagland et al. 2004).

Vouchers. **USA. Oklahoma.** McCurtain Co.: On the Lower Mountain Fork River, Presbyterian Falls area, T5S R26E Sec. 31, 29 Aug 2013, *Buthod & Hoagland AB-10591* (OKL); on the Lower Mountain Fork River, Presbyterian Falls area, T5S R26E Sec. 31, 4 Oct 2013, *Buthod & Hoagland AB-10592* (OKL).

In the USA, *Murdannia keisak* is found in wet areas including river and creek margins, tidal marshes, swamps, and ditches (Faden 2000; Hotchkiss 1951; Rundell & Diamond 1999). It is thought to have been a contaminant of rice and is frequently found in old rice fields (Dunn & Sharitz 1990a).

A sterile specimen of *Murdannia keisak* (AB-10591) was first collected in August 2013 on the lower Mountain Fork River in southeastern McCurtain County. Associated species included *Gratiola brevifolia, Hydrocotyle verticillata, Taxodium distichum, Xyris jupicai*, and the endangered *Harperella nodosa*. A second, fruiting collection (AB-10592) was made approximately 1.0 km upstream in October 2013. Associated species included *Impatiens capensis, Itea virginica, Polygonum persicaria, Sacciolepis striata*, and *Taxodium disticum*. Plants of *Murdannia* at both sites numbered in the hundreds (Fig. 1).

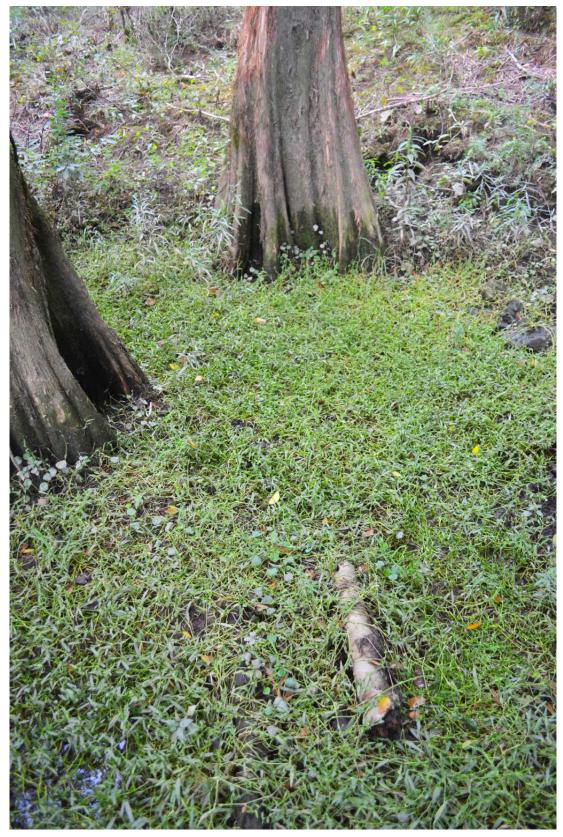


Figure 1. Population of  $Murdannia\ keisak$  on the Mountain Fork River, McCurtain County, Oklahoma. Photo by Amy Buthod

Although rice was once grown in McCurtain County (Reasoner 1974), the presence of Murdannia keisak in Oklahoma may be attributed to waterfowl. M. keisak can produce 9,000-70,000 seeds/m<sup>2</sup>, and they have been found in great abundance in the stomachs of ducks (Dunn and Sharitz 1990a; Hotchkiss 1940, 1951). It is also possible that pieces of the plant floated in from elsewhere; adventitious roots are produced by larger plants at the nodes, allowing for vegetative reproduction via fragmentation (Dunn and Shartitz 1990b; Ferrero et al. 2012).

According to Newberry (1991), Murdannia keisak may reduce rates of water flow because of its rhizomatous growth and fibrous roots. It grows fast and forms a thick mat, allowing it to outcompete native vegetation (Ferrero et al. 2012). It has also been shown to easily adapt to different environmental conditions (Dunn & Sharitz 1991). The Oklahoma population of *Murdannia keisak* will need to be carefully monitored. The Forest Service sensitive species Calamovilfa arcuata K.E. Rogers and Vernonia lettermanii Engelm. ex A. Gray are found on the Mountain Fork River, as is the western-most known population of the endangered Harperella nodosa (Rose) Rose (Buthod & Hoagland 2013; Hoagland et al. 2004; U.S. Forest Service 2005). We intend to evaluate the full extent of M. keisak in the Mountain Fork drainage in conjunction with future work on the endangered Harperella nodosa.

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