

Dock (Broadleaf)

Rumex obtusifolius

Broad-leaved dock is a persistent, deep-rooted perennial weed common in pastures, gardens, and waste areas worldwide. It thrives in disturbed, damp soil, forming large, oval leaves and a robust taproot up to 2-3 feet deep. It is difficult to eliminate because it regenerates from root fragments, requiring full taproot extraction or systemic herbicide (e.g., glyphosate) for control.

Identification

Leaves: Large, broad, wavy-edged leaves with a rounded base.

Root System: A thick, long, yellow/brown taproot that is difficult to remove entirely.

Flowers/Seedheads: Produces dense spikes of tiny, reddish-brown flowers that turn into seeds in summer, which are spread by birds and wind.

Size: Can grow up to 1.5 meters (nearly 5 feet) tall.

Control

Physical Removal: Use a garden fork to dig up the entire taproot, especially in moist soil. Breaking the root often leads to regrowth.

Prevent Seeding: Remove flowering stems immediately to prevent further infestation.

Herbicide: Systemic herbicides like Glyphosate (e.g., 360 g/L) are highly effective at killing the entire root. In natural areas, selective, broadleaf-specific weedkillers are recommended.

