

PENSYLVANICUS or PENNSYLVANICUS?—In recent years, in fact since Torrey and his successors, the specific epithet *pensylvanicus* (*a, um*) has been very generally spelled with two n's in the first syllable. This, of course, is in accord with the present spelling of the name of the state, Pennsylvania. Whenever, therefore, we go back to the original spelling of the specific epithet derived from that of the state, protests come in, for we have so long been accustomed to the liberties taken with original spellings by a great series of botanists that we are inclined to think the original spelling wrong and needing alteration. In 1917, in discussing *Polygonum pensylvanicum*, I wrote: "The specific name *pensylvanicum* was consistently so written by Linnaeus and by his contemporaries, but in most modern works it has been made to agree with modern geographic usage and written '*pennsylvanicum*,' apparently under the impression that an orthographic error is thus being corrected. Maps of the 18th century generally show the spelling *Pensylvania* so that it appears that Linnaeus, Lamarck and others who wrote the specific name with a single *n* in the first syllable were not committing an orthographic error but were following the authorized spelling of their day." (RHODORA, xix. 70.) Incidentally, of course, WILLIAM PEN or PENN used both spellings; Pepys, writing of him, used the first.

Since the protests continue to come in whenever one of these original spellings is taken up, it has seemed worth while to see whether a "standardized" spelling with the double *n* of recent usage is justified. The species in the flora of eastern North America which now have or which have recently borne the offending name are as follows. If in a half-hour's compilation I have overlooked a name its omission will not seriously change the conclusion. The original spelling alone is given.

1. ACER PENSYLVANICUM L. Sp. Pl. 1055 (1753).
2. ANEMONE PENSYLVANICA L. Mant. 247 (1771).
3. AVENA (now *Trisetum*) PENSYLVANICA L. Sp. Pl. 79 (1753).
4. CARDAMINE PENSYLVANICA Muhl. ex Willd. Sp. Pl. iii. 482 (1801).
5. CAREX PENSYLVANICA Lam. Encyc. iii. 388 (1789).
6. FRAXINUS PENNSYLVANICA Marsh. Arbust. 51 (1785).
7. MYRICA PENSYLVANICA or PENSILVANICA Loisel. in Nouv. Duhamel, ii. 190, t. 55 (1802), the first spelling validated by Chevalier, Mon. Myric. 182 (1901).
8. PARIETARIA PENSYLVANICA Muhl. ex Willd. Sp. Pl. iv. 955 (1806).
9. POLYGONUM PENSYLVANICUM L. Sp. Pl. 362 (1753).
10. POTAMOGETON PENSYLVANICUS Willd. ex Cham. & Schlecht. in Linnaea, ii. 227 (1827).



11. POTENTILLA PENNSYLVANICA L. Mant. i. 76 (1767).
12. PRUNUS PENNSYLVANICA L. f. Suppl. 252 (1781).
13. RANUNCULUS PENNSYLVANICUS L. f. Suppl. 272 (1781).
14. SAXIFRAGA PENNSYLVANICA L. Sp. Pl. 399 (1753).
15. SILENE PENNSYLVANICA Michx. Fl. Bor.-Am. i. 273 (1803).
16. VACCINIUM PENNSYLVANICUM Lam. Encycl. i. 74 (1783).

In 15 out of the 16 cases (only *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* diverging), it will be noted, only a single N was used; in other words, a current spelling of the period was followed. Those who appeal to have the spelling standardized would hardly change the specific epithet *upsalensis* simply because it is the temporary or at least recent fashion to change the long familiar name Upsala to Uppsala. In two cases, *Myrica* and *Vaccinium*, the spelling *pensilvanica* (or *um*) was originally used, but these cases need not cause trouble. Loiseleur-Deslongchamps wavered between *Myrica pensylvanica* and *M. pensilvanica* and Chevalier, in his monograph of the group, selected (and thus validated) the more usual spelling. As to the *Vaccinium*, *V. Pensilvanicum* Lam. (1783) is antedated by *V. Pensylvanica* Mill. (1768) and, under existing rules, automatically goes into oblivion. The spelling *pensylvanicus*, as a maintained specific name, thus has right-of-way, except in the single case of *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* Marsh. Would those who want standardization wish to alter that?—M. L. FERNALD.

---

POTAMOGETON HILLII IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS.—On July 30, 1939, I made a short excursion to a small pond at South Egremont, Massachusetts, and found great masses of the linear-leaved *Potamogeton Hillii* Morong growing in the slow streams which feed this most fascinating pool. Associated with it were the common *P. natans*, *Najas flexilis*, and a species of *Chara*. Both Potamogetons were fruiting heavily. This is the first Massachusetts record for *P. Hillii*, but by reason of its occurrence in neighboring Connecticut and New York, it was to be expected sooner or later in Berkshire County. Specimens, no. 1626 in my personal herbarium, have been sent to Gray Herbarium and are to be found in the herbarium at Iowa State College.—WILLIAM A. WEBER, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.



Fernald, Merritt Lyndon. 1940. "Pensylvanicus or pennsylvanicus." *Rhodora* 42, 94–95.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/14512>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/123027>

**Holding Institution**

Missouri Botanical Garden, Peter H. Raven Library

**Sponsored by**

Missouri Botanical Garden

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.