



Ephedra antisiphilitica MEYER, ESTABLISHING  
ANOTHER ORDER OF PLANTS FOR  
OKLAHOMA\*

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On January 31, 1932, the authors made a collection of *Ephedra* seven miles southwest of Hollis, Oklahoma. As far as the authors could ascertain, this is the first time any member of the Gnetales, the more unique of the two orders of Strobilophyta (class Gymnospermae), has been recognized growing out of cultivation in Oklahoma.

The specimen collected was tentatively identified as *Ephedra antisiphilitica* Meyer. It belongs to the Ephedraceae. This family, the only representatives of the Gnetales in the United States, is represented in North America by six species of the genus *Ephedra*; all small shrubs with slender, terete, striate stems, having leaves represented by small scarious bracts. *Ephedra* superficially resembles *Equisetum*. All North America members of the genus are commonly called joint fir, Mormon tea, or Brigham Young weed, and all are used in infusion by Mexicans and Indians as a cure for kidney affections and venereal diseases.

The range for the North American species of *Ephedra*, according to Pearson (1) is restricted to desert and steppe regions of the southwest as far east as New Mexico and the Rio Grande region of south Texas. Rydberg (2) gives the range of *Ephedra antisiphilitica* as south Colorado, west Texas, and north Mexico. Little (3) has found it in the Palo Duro Canyon along Red River one hundred and twenty-five miles west in the Texas Panhandle. This moves the northeast boundary of the range for this species one hundred and twenty-five miles east, and since this species occurs further to the east than any of the other species, also extends the range of the order in North America.

*Ephedra antisiphilitica* was found rather abundantly in a halophytic desert community on the west slope of a gypsum cliff on the north bank

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of Red River, about three miles east of the Texas boundary. Most of the specimens were growing near exposed outcrops of gypsum. At least two species of arborescent *Opuntia* and two prostrate species were abundantly represented in the community, as were *Prosopis*, *Yucca*, *Artemisia*, *Condalia*, and a much-branched species of *Echinocereus*.

- (1) Pearson, H. H. W. *Gnetales*. Cambridge University Press. 1929.
- (2) Rydberg, P. A. *Flora of the Rocky Mountains and Adjacent Plains*. Published by the author. New York. 1917.
- (3) Little, E. L. From correspondence with Dr. Little.

