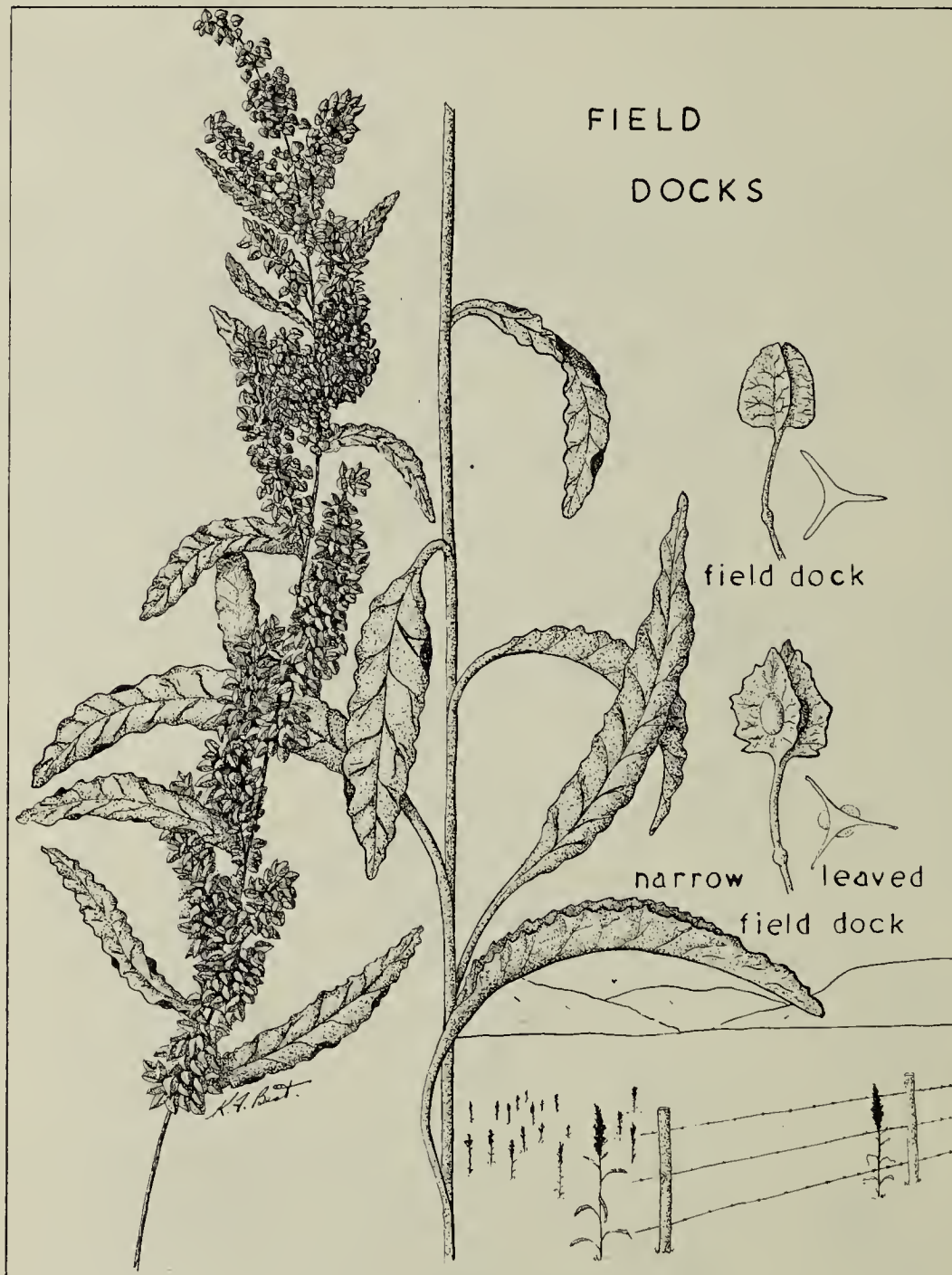


Field Docks

(*Rumex fennicus* and *Rumex stenophyllus*)

By KEITH BEST, Dom. Experimental Farm, Swift Current



These two introduced Eurasian docks, commonly called field docks, closely resemble the common Western dock of the wet areas, but can be distinguished by the small enlarged joint below the middle of the stalk of the fruiting valves. In addition, the native Western dock has no tubercles in the valves of the fruit but one of these new docks has three tubercles, one in each valve, while the other dock may sometimes bear one tubercle. The margins of the valves are somewhat toothed in narrow-leaved field dock, but merely wavy in field dock and Western dock. All have long, broad leaves and may grow to a height of from 3 to 4 feet. While Western dock is

mainly a plant of moist areas, the field docks seem to thrive everywhere and even invade the grassy fields.

First noticed about 1942, the field docks have now become one of the most common weeds throughout the southwestern part of the province and are rapidly spreading in every direction. They are perennials but spread mainly by seed of which immense quantities are produced. The large brown fruiting heads are a familiar and conspicuous sight along the roadsides and in the fields. Being resistant to chemical weedicides, the only control is good cultivation practices to prevent seed formation and to weaken and destroy the roots.