

Study of the morphological variation of *Hypericum prolificum* (Hypericaceae)

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Hypericum prolificum L. (Hypericaceae) is a shrubby member of *Hypericum* sect. Myriandra that is widespread in the eastern half of temperate North America. It's a morphologically variable taxon, especially in the Ozark portion of its range, and some botanists have suggested it should be divided up into 2 or more varieties, subspecies, or species. The present morphometric study involved measuring 11 characters from 33 samples originating from field collections and herbarium specimens. The measurements were taken through direct examination with a ruler and/or optical micrometer, and through high-resolution scans of the specimens in ImageJ. Measurements were analyzed by PCA and Mclust. Results suggested that the samples belonged to a single variable taxon and did not support any taxonomic subdivisions. Further studies should be conducted with more populations and a larger set of morphological characters. The studies could be expanded to include *Hypericum lobocarpum* Gatt. of the southeastern U.S. to evaluate whether it is morphologically distinct from *H. prolificum*.