97. PlucheaCass. (marsh fleabane)

Plants annual orperennial herbs (woody elsewhere), fibrous-rooted, sometimes with shortrhizomes, usually glandular, the sap not milky. Stems erect or ascending,hairy, unbranched or few-branched toward the tip, not spiny or prickly. Leavesalternate, not spiny or prickly, sometimes slightly succulent, sessile orshort-petiolate. Leaf blades simple, the margins toothed. Inflorescences mostlyterminal panicles or the stem branches with a small cluster of heads at thetip. Heads appearing discoid. Involucre urn-shaped to hemispherical or somewhatbell-shaped, with several series of more or less overlapping bracts, the innerseries progressively longer, these usually appressed, not spiny or tuberculate,usually glandular. Receptacle flat, naked. Inner florets few, appearing perfectbut mostly functionally staminate (the style branches usually not spreading atmaturity), the corolla with short lobes. Outer florets more numerous,pistillate (lacking stamens), the corolla very slender and shorter than thestyle, the lobes very short. Pappus a ring of numerous capillary bristles,these finely toothed, persistent at fruiting. Stamens with the filaments notfused together, the anthers fused into a tube, each tip with a short, oftenindistinct appendage, each base prolonged into a pair of slender lobes. Stylebranches not flattened, each with a stigmatic line along each inner margin, thesterile tip rounded, hairy. Fruits 0.6–1.0 mm long, cylindrical, with4–6 ribs, not winged, not beaked, pinkish tan, hairy, at least alongthe ribs. 50–80 species, nearly worldwide.

Plants of Plucheausually are quite aromatic when crushed or bruised, with a camphorlike or muskyodor. Steyermark (1963) likened the odor of P. camphorata to that of askunk. Native Americans used some species medicinally for diarrhea, fever, skinailments, and hemorrhoids, and also as a sedative (Moerman, 1998).