

Small White Snakeroot

Ageratina aromatica

Description

Small White Snakeroot is an herbaceous perennial with a hairy stem that may grow to 2 feet (ca 60 cm) in height, but may be much shorter. The leaves are oppositely arranged, short-stalked, egg-shaped to broadly lance-shaped, toothed on the margin, variably hairy, thickish in texture, and to 3 inches (7 cm) in length and to 2 inches (ca 5 cm) in width. The white flowers, appearing from August to October, are individually minute and are aggregated in small clusters, or “heads”, at the tips of the branches. The fruits are minute, dry, one-seeded, with a tuft of hairs at the tip that promotes wind dispersal. This species greatly resembles a very common and widespread species, White Snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*), but the latter tends to be a larger plant with larger, thinner, and more sharply toothed leaves, and is found in a wide variety of habitats.



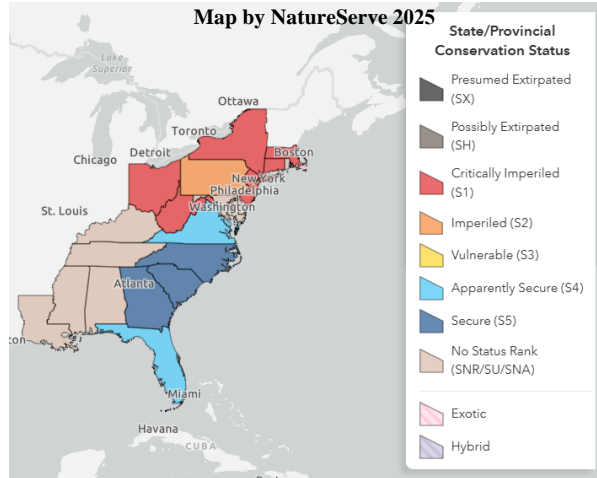
Photo source: John Kunsman, PNHP

Distribution & Habitat

Small White Snakeroot has a range from southern New England south into the Gulf Coast states. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically mostly in the southeastern counties. It grows in various types of well drained openings and open woods, but is especially a characteristic species of the serpentine barrens in the southeastern part of the state.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025

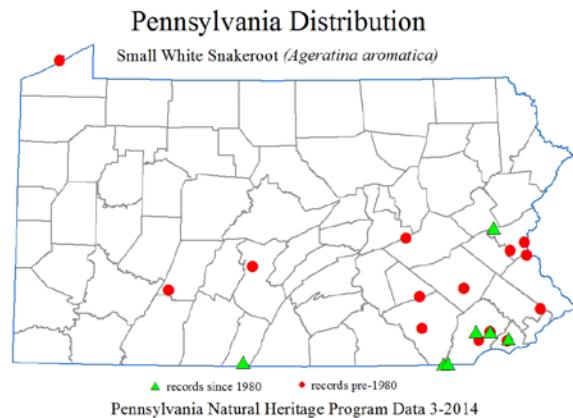


Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Small White Snakeroot to be a species of special concern, based on the limited number of locations that have been recently confirmed. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Threatened.

Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Small White Snakeroot often requires maintaining early successional conditions and controlling invasive species. Active management, such as periodic mowing or prescribed fire, may be needed to create the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for this species to thrive. Quarrying and habitat loss are threats in some locations.



NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; **S2** – Imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2014.
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

