

St. Andrew's Cross

Hypericum stragulum

Description

St. Andrew's cross is a low-growing, deciduous shrub with erect stems up to 12 inches (30 cm) tall. The leaves are oppositely arranged, ¾ to 1 inch (2-3 cm) long, untoothed on the margin, oval or lance-shaped and usually widest above the middle, rounded at the tip and tapered toward the base. The flowers, appearing in July and August, are bright yellow and have 4 narrow petals, which are about ½ inch (9 mm) long and configured in a cross-like pattern, and are subtended by 2 green sepals. The fruit is a many-seeded capsule.



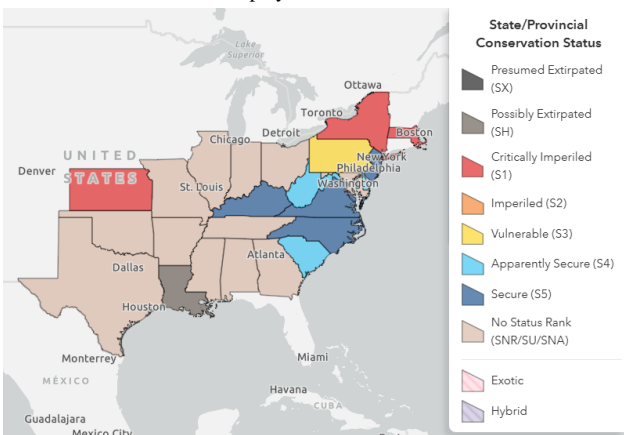
Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

Distribution & Habitat

St. Andrew's cross occurs from New York and Massachusetts south into Georgia and west into Kansas and Texas. In Pennsylvania, this species occurs near the northern end of its range, and has been found in several southern, particularly southeastern, counties. It grows in dryish, open places, such as grasslands, successional clearings, thickets, open woods, and serpentine barrens.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers St. Andrew's cross to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed. It does not have a PA legal rarity status, but has been assigned a suggested rarity status of Rare by PABS. About 10 populations are currently known from the state.

Conservation Considerations

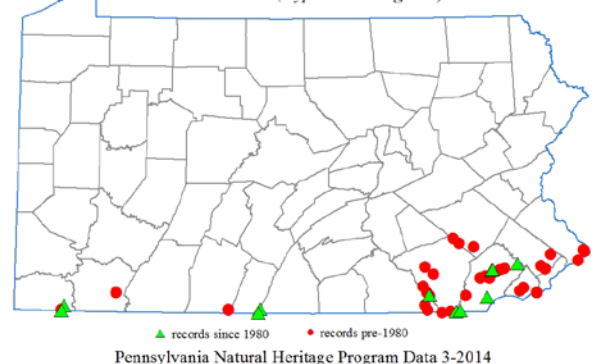
The populations of St Andrew's cross in the state are threatened by human-related habitat loss, natural succession, invasive species, and indiscriminate application of herbicides. Given the preference of the species for open habitats, active management - such as fire, mowing, or invasive species removal - is often required to maintain the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for the species to thrive.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5T5 – Globally secure; **S3** – Vulnerable in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Distribution

St. Andrew's Cross (*Hypericum stragulum*)



References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

