

Striped Gentian

Gentiana villosa

Description

Striped gentian is a perennial herb that usually grows from 8 to 24 inches (2-6 dm) tall. The leaves are oppositely arranged, untoothed on the margin, hairless or nearly so, elliptic to widest above the middle, and 1 to 4 inches (2.5 -10 cm) long. The flowers, appearing in September and October, occur in dense clusters at the top of the stem. The petals are whitish-green (often tinged with purple), 1 to 2 inches (2.5-5.5 cm) long, and are fused for most of their length into a sac-like structure. The fruit is a many-seeded capsule.

Distribution & Habitat

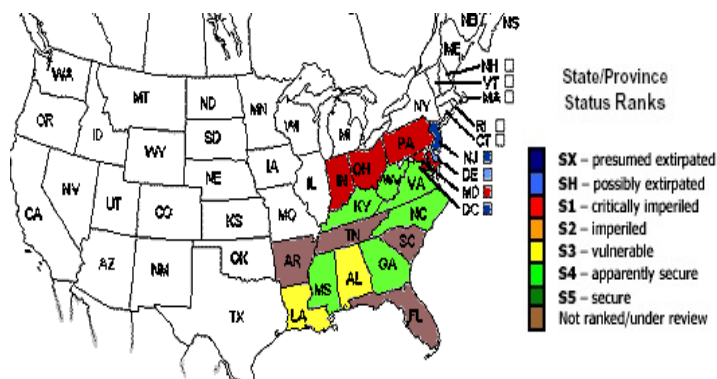
Striped gentian has a range from New Jersey west into Indiana, and south into the Gulf Coast states. In Pennsylvania, it occurs at a northern border of its range, and has been documented historically mostly in the southeastern counties. It grows in grasslands, successional openings, serpentine barrens, and dry open woods.



Photo source: R. Harrison Wiegand

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2014



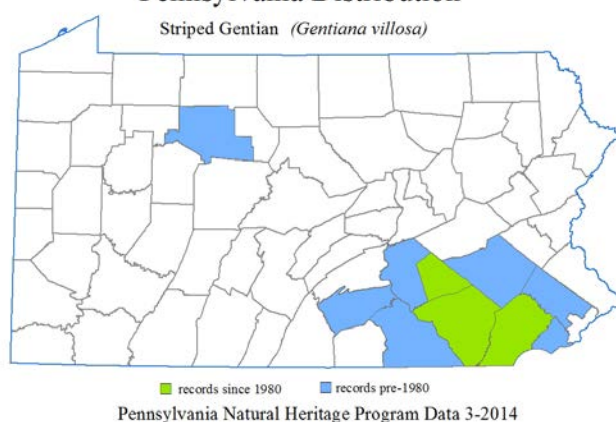
Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers striped gentian to be a species of special concern, based on the very few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and the specialized habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status of Undetermined and has been assigned a suggested rarity status of Endangered by PABS. Fewer than 5 populations are currently known from the state.

Conservation Considerations

The populations of striped gentian in the state are threatened by human-related habitat loss, natural succession, invasive species, and excessive deer browsing. 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.

Pennsylvania Distribution



NatureServe conservation status ranks

G4– Apparently globally secure; **S1** –Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

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.

