

Jeweled Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon radicum*)

Pennsylvania Threatened Plant Species

State Rank: S2 (imperiled), Global Rank: GNR (not rated)

Identification

The jeweled shooting-star has deep red-purple flowers. The petals bend backwards while the stamens form a cone in the center, giving the impression of a falling star or comet. The flowers are arranged in an attractive, nodding umbel at the top of a 1-foot stem, above a basal rosette of leaves.

Biology-Natural History

The jeweled shooting-star belongs to the Primrose Family (*Primulaceae*). There are two *Dodecatheon* species in Pennsylvania. *D. amethystinum* is distinguished from *D. meadia* by a thinner fruit wall and the deeper red-purple flower color. Blossoms of jeweled shooting-star open in late April to May.

Habitat

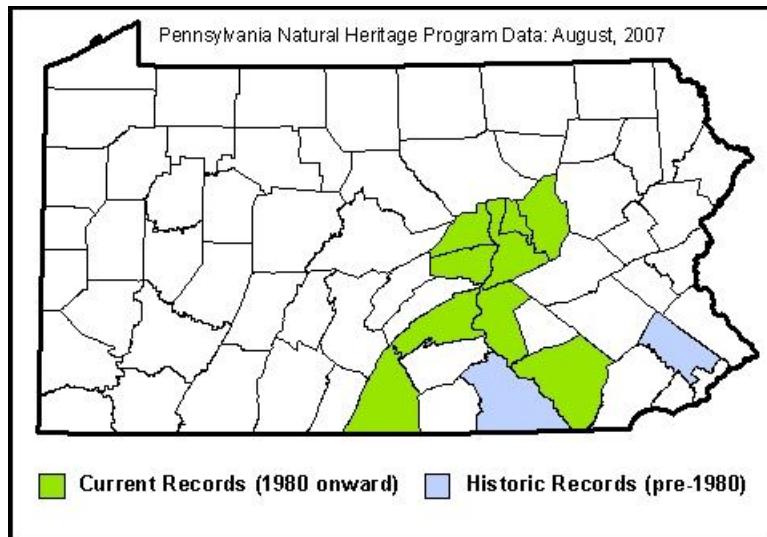
This species is quite rare in parts of its natural range. It grows on moist, shaded areas of east and north facing limestone outcrops and river bluffs. The plants often occur on rock ledges that receive dripping water or along wet cliffs, but are also known from dry to moist alkaline bluffs.



Photo Credit: Tom Smith, Virginia Division of National Heritage

Reasons for Being Threatened

Fourteen populations are known to exist in Pennsylvania. Four historically documented sites were lost to development and railroad line blasting. Limestone mining and development continue to threaten some populations. Plants growing near railroads may be threatened by herbicides used to keep tracks clear of weeds.



Management Practices

One jeweled shooting-star site has been registered through The Nature Conservancy's Landowner Contact Program. Environmental assessments for development or road expansion should include measures to protect this plant. Landowner contact should be pursued to protect other known plant sites.

