

White monkshood (*Aconitum reclinatum*)

Pennsylvania Endangered

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G3 (vulnerable)

What it looks like:

White monkshood (*Aconitum reclinatum*), a member of the buttercup family, is a perennial herb with a delicate stem. It grows as tall as one meter (three feet), trailing along the ground or leaning against surrounding vegetation.

Leaves are numerous and cauline (grow from the stem), and deeply divided into wedge- or oval-shaped, coarsely toothed segments.

Flowers are white or yellow-white irregular cones opening downward, grouped in an inflorescence at the end of the stem. White monkshood flowers from June to September.

Where it is found:

White monkshood grows in moist areas along streams, in coves, or in seeps within mixed forests at high elevation. Populations are known in southwestern Pennsylvania, where the plant is quite rare, south into West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina (see map). The largest known populations (a few with tens of thousands of individuals) are in North Carolina.

Why it is rare:

Though white monkshood recovers well when protected, it is threatened by logging activity and may be disturbed by drainage or filling of its wetland habitats. It is also sensitive to over-grazing by cattle or deer. In Pennsylvania, a fungus has been discovered attacking the plants before they can produce fruit.

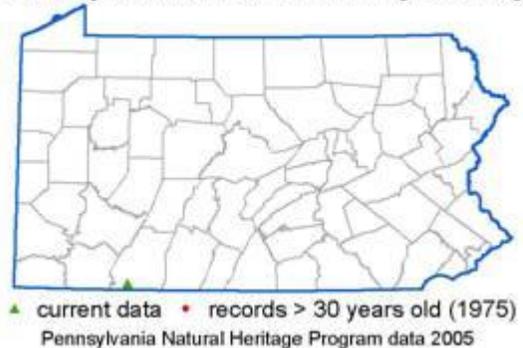
Conservation considerations:

A. reclinatum seems to benefit from deer exclusion. In 1993, an exclusion experiment fenced off one of the Pennsylvanian populations of the plant, and it grew from one plant to five in two years' time. Preservation of wetlands and maintenance of buffer areas along streams will provide the species with more habitat.



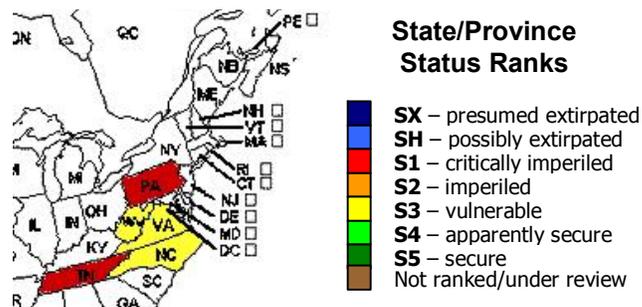
Kathy McKenna, Bureau of Forestry

Pennsylvania Distribution by County



North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program



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References

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