# Nodding Trillium
## *Trillium cernuum*

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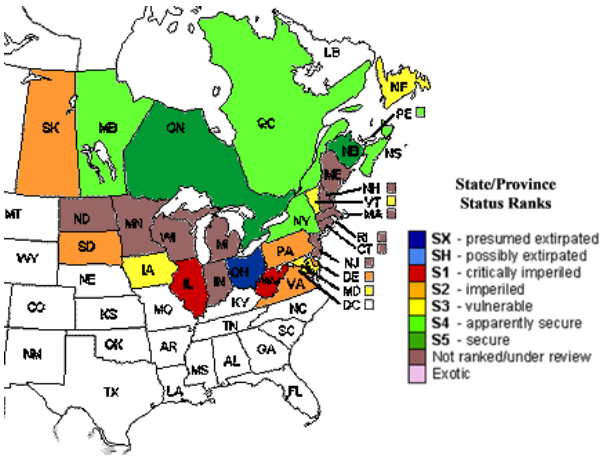
### Description
Nodding trillium is a perennial herb that grows up to 16 inches (4 dm) tall. The leaves occur in a whorl of 3, with the leaf blades being stalkless or nearly so, oval to diamond-shaped, 2 to 6 inches (5-15 cm) long, and hairless. The single flower has a drooping stalk and hangs below the leaves. Each 1 to 1½ inch (2.5-4 cm) flower has 3 white to pinkish petals backed by 3 alternating green sepals. The petals curve strongly upward toward the bottom of the leaves. The blooming time is in April and May.

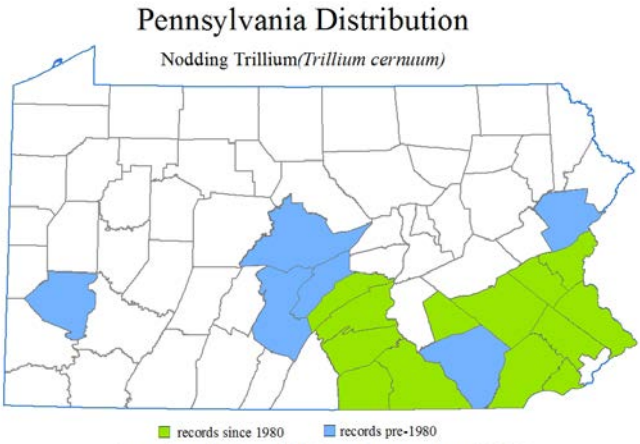
Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

### Distribution & Habitat
Nodding trillium can be found in the U. S. from Maine south to Virginia and west to North and South Dakota. In Pennsylvania, it occurs mostly in the southeastern counties, where it grows in rich, moist woods.

**North American State/Province Conservation Status**
Map by NatureServe 2014




### Current State Status
The PA Biological Survey considers nodding trillium to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently documented. It does not have a PA legal rarity status, but has been assigned a PABS suggested rarity status of Threatened. Habitat loss, land conversion for development, and displacement by invasive species have all played a part in the decline of nodding trillium populations. Many of the remaining rich, moist forests in southeastern and south-central Pennsylvania have become increasingly fragmented, which further degrades habitat quality. Over-abundant deer populations have also contributed to reduced nodding trillium numbers.




### Conservation Considerations
Maintenance of known populations and preservation of the communities where nodding trillium grows will be crucial to its survival. Creating buffers around fragmented habitat and removal of invasive species will help to maintain populations and encourage new population growth. The management of the known sites requires long term monitoring of populations.

### NatureServe conservation status ranks
G5 – Globally secure; S2– Imperiled in Pennsylvania

### References


- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at 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.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