

# Small Beggar-ticks *Bidens discoidea*

## Description

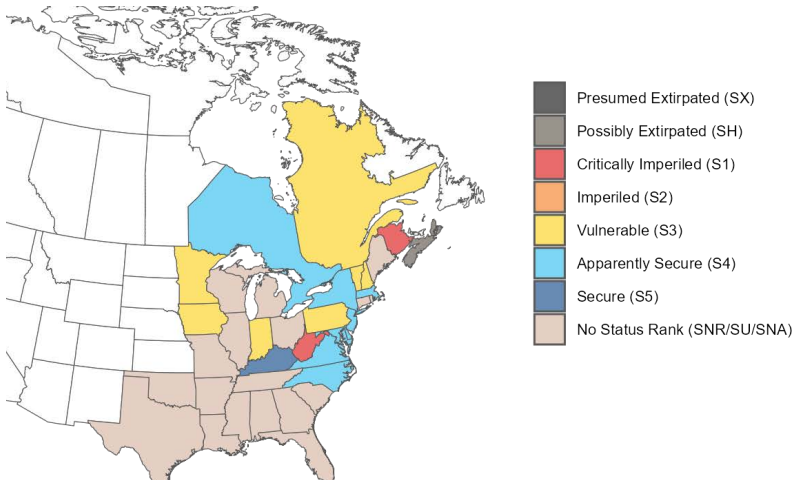
Small Beggar-ticks is an herbaceous annual with a hairless stem that may grow to 2 feet (ca 60 cm) in height. The leaves are oppositely arranged, divided into 3 stalked leaflets with the end leaflet of each leaf having the longest stalk and the largest blade, lance-shaped, pointed at the tip, toothed on the margin, and to 4 inches (10 cm) in length and to 1 inch (2.5 cm) in width. The flowers, appearing from August to October, are individually minute and are aggregated in small clusters (“heads”) at the tips of the branches. Each head is subtended and exceeded in length by 3-5 leaf-like bracts that lack hairs on their margins. The features of the bracts are important, as other species of beggar-ticks are distinguished from Small Beggar-ticks by having more numerous bracts that have hairs on their margins. The fruit of Small Beggar-ticks is dry, one-seeded, flattened, tipped with a pair of projections, or “awns,” that have small upwardly-pointed barbs along their length that cause the fruit to dislodge and cling to clothing, and give the species its common name.



Photo source: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

## North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



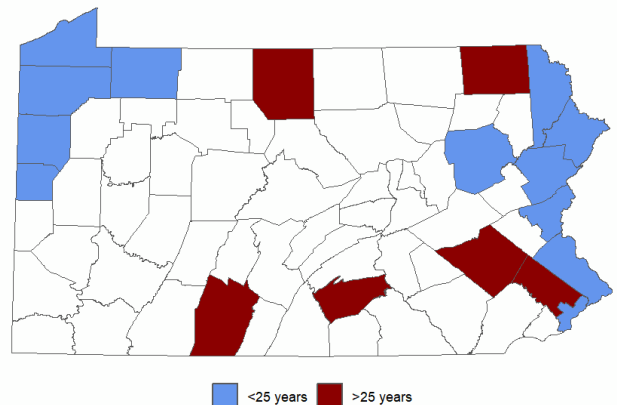
## Distribution & Habitat

Small Beggar-ticks ranges from Nova Scotia to Ontario and south into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in a scattered pattern, but particularly in the northeastern counties. It grows in various types of wetlands, including swamps, lake shores, vernal ponds, and bogs.

## Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Small Beggar-ticks to be a species of special concern, based on the moderate number of locations recently confirmed and the wetland habitat. It does not have a PA legal rarity status, but has been assigned a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare.

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## Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Small Beggar-ticks and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology around wetlands and controlling invasive species. Due to the similar appearance of this species and other species of beggar-ticks, care must be taken in identification. It is likely that more populations of Small Beggar-ticks will be documented.

## NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S3 – Vulnerable in Pennsylvania



## References

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2025.
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.