

Elephant's Foot

Elephantopus carolinianus

Description

Elephant's Foot is a perennial herb with a variably hairy stem that may grow to 3 feet (ca 1 m) tall. The leaves are arranged alternately, broadly elliptic in shape, shallowly toothed on the margin, hairy below, and to 10 inches (25 cm) long. The small, whitish or purplish individual flowers are grouped in flower heads, each of which is subtended by several leaf-like bracts that give the plant one of its distinctive features.

Distribution & Habitat

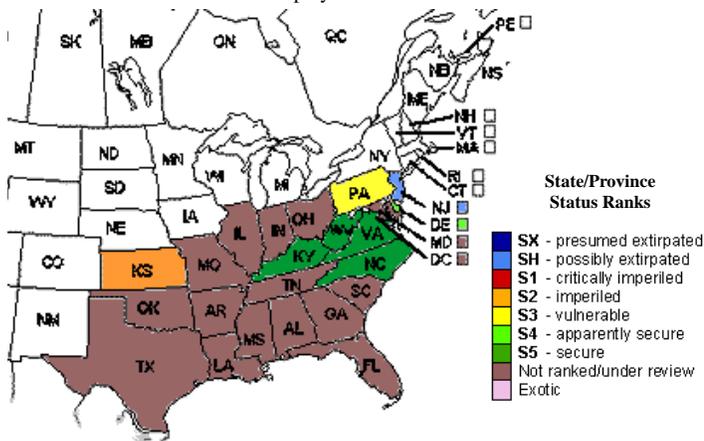
Elephant's Foot has a range from Pennsylvania west into Kansas and south into Texas and Florida. In Pennsylvania, it represents a southerly species and occurs at a northern border of its range, and has been found in a few southern, particularly southeastern, counties. It grows in open woodlands, woodland borders, and serpentine barrens, often in somewhat disturbed conditions.



Photo source: R Harrison Wiegand

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Elephant's Foot to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and its limited state range. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare. About 10 populations are currently documented from the state.

Conservation Considerations

Populations of Elephant's Foot are threatened by human-related habitat loss, natural succession, and invasive species. Since the species may occupy disturbed habitats, active management may be required to create the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for the species to thrive. Deer browsing may be a problem in some locations.

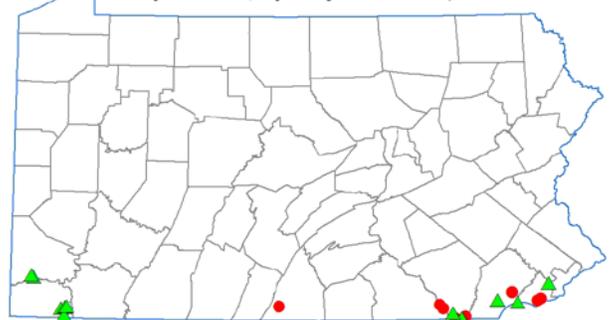
NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally Secure;

S3 – Critically Imperiled in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Distribution

Elephant's Foot (*Elephantopus carolinianus*)



▲ records since 1980 ● records pre-1980
Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2014

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2014.
- 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. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

