

Plain Ragwort

Packera anomyma

Description

Plain ragwort is a perennial member of the aster family that bears numerous yellow, aster-like flower heads between 1 and 2¾ feet (3-8 dm) tall and is densely woolly at the base. The leaves grow from the base of the plant as well as along the stems. Basal leaves are toothed, lance-shaped to elliptic, and taper at their base to a petiole. Stem leaves are smaller, deeply dissected, and may attach without a petiole. The flowers are displayed in terminal, flat-topped clusters of 20 to 100 flower heads. Individual flower-heads are about ½ to ¾ inch (13-20 mm) wide and have a yellow central disk surrounded by 8 to 15 yellow rays.



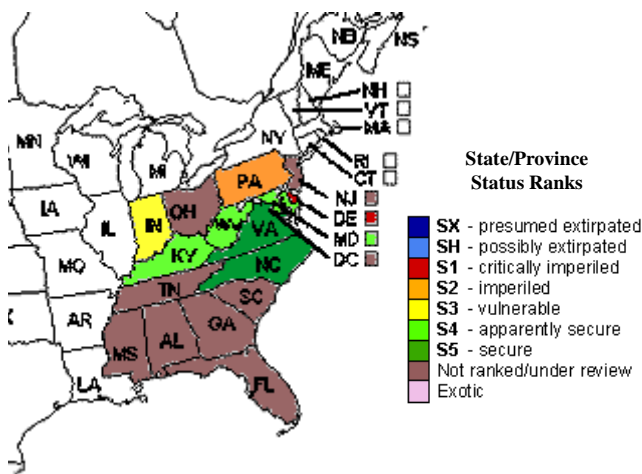
Photo source: PNHP

Distribution & Habitat

Plain ragwort can be found from New Jersey and Pennsylvania south to Florida and west to Indiana through Mississippi. In Pennsylvania this species is most commonly found growing in serpentine barrens and in dry, open woods.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

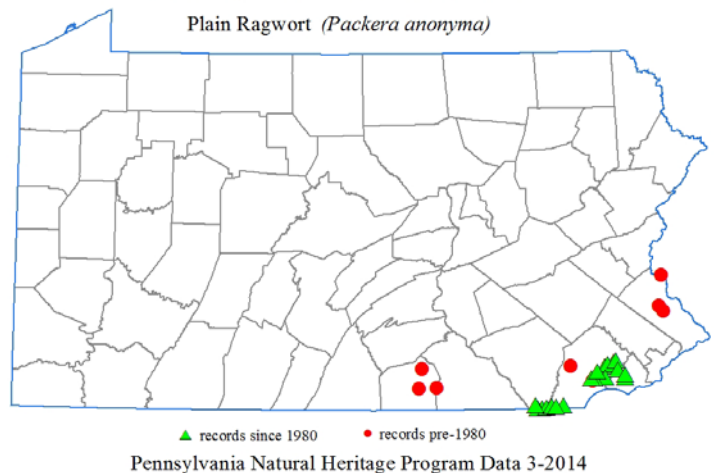
Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers plain ragwort to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently confirmed and its serpentine habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare.

Pennsylvania Distribution



Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of plain ragwort and its serpentine habitat will require maintaining early successional conditions and controlling invasive species. Active management, through the use of fire, scraping the substrate, or mowing, may be needed to create the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for this species to thrive. Quarrying and habitat loss are threats in some locations.

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.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program