Swamp Chestnut Oak
Quercus michauxii

Description

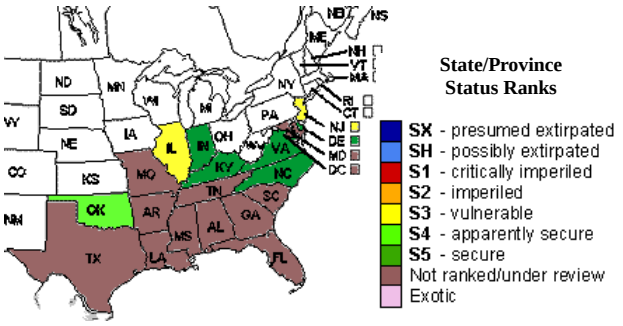
Swamp Chestnut Oak is a large tree with grayish bark that can grow to 100 feet (30 m) in height. The overwintering buds are reddish-brown and minutely hairy. The leaves are alternately arranged, tending to be widest in the middle or nearer to the tip, usually 4 or more inches (10 cm or more) in length and 2½ to 4 inches (to10 cm) in width, with 8-16 pairs of more-or-less parallel secondary veins that end in rounded teeth. The leaf undersurface (under high magnification) has sparse to dense hairs that are erect and few-branched (not flattened to the leaf surface and many-branched, as in some related species). The flowers, which appear in spring as the leaves emerge, are separated into male and female; the former are more conspicuous, being grouped in slender, dangling clusters, or "catkins." The fruit is the well-known acorn, which in this species consists of a nut averaging about 1 inch (2.5 cm) in length enclosed about halfway by a bowl-like cup, which is covered by small, overlapping, triangular-shaped scales.

Photo source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

Distribution & Habitat

Swamp Chestnut Oak ranges from New Jersey to Missouri and south into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in two southeastern counties. The species grows in swamps, seasonally wet woods, and bottomlands.

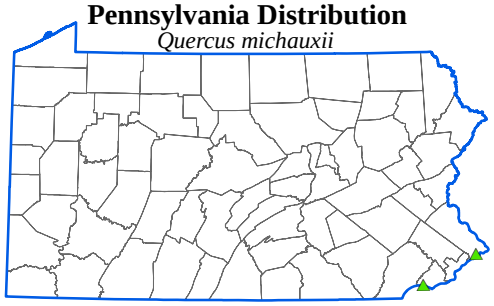
North American State/Province Conservation Status
Map by NatureServe 2010



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Swamp Chestnut Oak to be a species of special concern, based on the few locations that have been recently confirmed. It does not have a PA legal status, but has been assigned a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered.

Pennsylvania Distribution
Quercus michauxii



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2011

Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Swamp Chestnut Oak and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology surrounding wetlands and controlling invasive species. Excessive deer browse is a threat at the known locations.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; **S1** – Critically Imperiled in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

References

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- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
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