# Grooved Yellow Flax (Linum sulcatum)

Plant Species of Concern State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled), Global Rank: G5 (secure)

## **Identification**

Grooved yellow flax is an erect annual herb that grows up to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet (75 cm) tall. The common name refers to its grooved stems which are purplish near the base. The leaves grow alternately along the stem. They are linear to oblong, have smooth margins, and attach directly to the stem without a petiole. There are two distinctive blackish glands on the stem near the base of each leaf. The flowers are yellow, have 5 smooth petals, and are roughly ½ inch (1-2 cm) wide. They are held in loose clusters near the top of the stem and bloom from May to September.

### Habitat

Grooved yellow flax occurs in the U. S. from New Hampshire and Vermont south to Florida and west to North Dakota through Texas. In Pennsylvania, it can be found growing in scattered sites on sandy barrens.

#### **North American State/Province Conservation Status** Map by NatureServe (2007)



### State/Province **Status Ranks**

**SX** – presumed extirpated

**SH** – possibly extirpated

**S1** – critically imperiled

**S2** – imperiled

**S3** – vulnerable

**S4** – apparently secure

S5 – secure

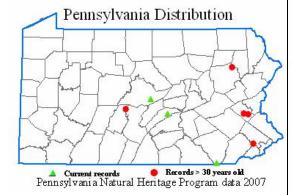
Not ranked/under review



The PA Biological Survey considers the grooved yellow flax to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been confirmed and the very specialized habitat. It has been assigned a rarity status of Endangered. Grooved yellow flax populations are threatened by habitat loss and succession. Over time, the open nature of the habitats required by this species may be lost due to encroachment by woody and invasive species. Other potential hazards include trampling, incompatible land management, and habitat fragmentation, which limits seed dispersal.



photo source: Robert W. Freckmann Herbarium, UWSP Merel L. Black



### Conservation

Maintenance of known populations and preservation of the sandy barrens communities where grooved yellow flax grows will be crucial to its survival. Removal of overgrowth and invasive species with the integration of fire regimes, when appropriate, will help to preserve the open nature of the sites. The management of the known sites requires long term monitoring of populations. Potential sites for restoration should be evaluated.

#### References



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