

# Appalachian blue violet (*Viola appalachiensis*)

*Pennsylvania Threatened Plant Species*

State Rank: S2 (imperiled) Global Rank: G3 (vulnerable)

## What it looks like:

The Appalachian blue violet is a low-growing herb with perennial stems which first grow upright but eventually lay flat and grow roots, facilitating the plant's spread. Later in the season, the plant often has a distinct mat-forming habit. It is very similar to Walker's violet (*Viola walkeri*) and the American dog-violet (*V. conspersa*), and it was once thought to be a hybrid of these species. However American dog-violet's stems are deciduous, dying away every year; and the leaves of Walker's violet are covered in fine hair, where those of the Appalachian blue violet are almost entirely smooth.



Western Pennsylvania Conservancy 2002

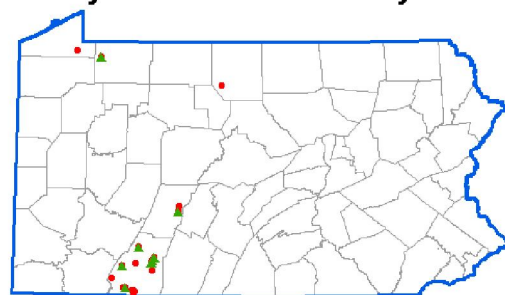
**Flowers** are pale violet with darker stripes, with one petal forming a spur that extends behind the corolla.

**Leaves** are wide and heart-shaped with shallow, rounded teeth.

## Where it is found:

Appalachian blue violets grow in serpentine barrens and rich forests in the southern Appalachian mountains. It has only been found in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. They also grow well in disturbed areas, and have been found on ground that is regularly mowed, on dirt roads, and in old fields.

## Pennsylvania Distribution by County



▲ current data • records > 30 years old (1975)

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program data 2005

## Why it is rare:

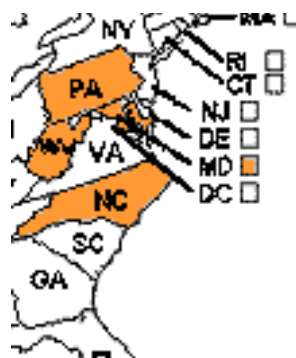
The primary reason for concern with this species is its limited global range. However, it is thought that this species has been frequently overlooked and may be more common than records indicate, and in most of its range most of the documented populations still exist.

## Conservation considerations:

Since the Appalachian blue violet seems to colonize human-disturbed areas, it has strong prospects for recovery. The species would benefit from measures to control or extirpate invasive exotic competitors; reduction of habitat fragmentation and land-use conversion may also benefit this species.

## North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe



### 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

## References

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