

Puttyroot

Aplectrum hyemale

Description

Puttyroot is a perennial herbaceous plant, arising from a roundish rootstock containing a mucilaginous substance that gives the plant its name. Each rootstock produces a single leaf at ground level in autumn. The leaf, which is easily recognized by its elliptical shape, wrinkled texture and whitish veins, remains evergreen over the winter, withers in late spring, and is replaced by a new leaf in autumn. The flowers, appearing in May and June, are clustered at the top of an erect leafless stalk that may reach 2 feet (6 dm) in height. The individual flowers are variously marked with purple, brown, white, and yellow. The fruit is a capsule that hangs downward and often persists over the winter.



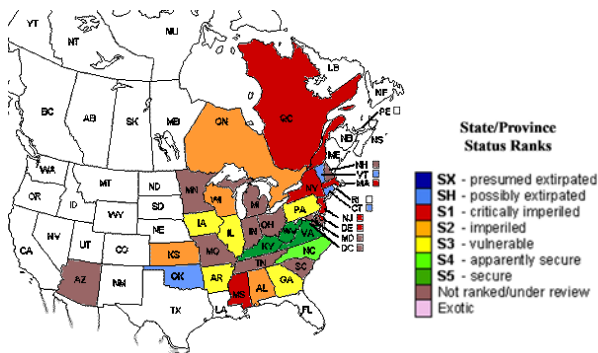
Photo source: Jack and Sally Ray (PNHP)

Distribution & Habitat

Puttyroot has a range from southern New England south and west into Arizona and the Gulf Coast states. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in numerous southern, particularly southeastern, counties. It grows in moist woodlands and on forested slopes and stream banks.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2014



Conservation Considerations

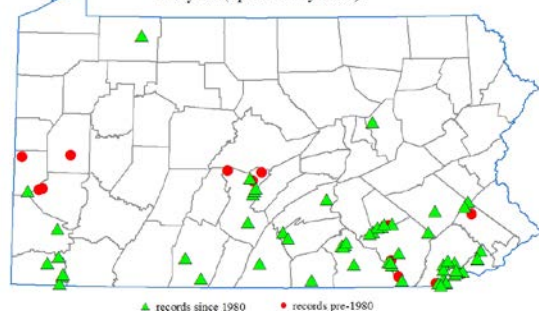
The known populations of Puttyroot have threats from habitat loss, invasive species, and in some locations, excessive browsing by deer. Establishing buffers around fragmented forested habitat and removal of invasive species will help to maintain populations.

Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Puttyroot to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently documented. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare. About 40 populations are currently known from the state

Pennsylvania Distribution

Puttyroot (*Aplectrum hyemale*)



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2014

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally Secure; **S3** – Vulnerable in Pennsylvania

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.

