Purple fringeless orchid (*Platanthera peramoena*)

Pennsylvania Plant Species of Concern
State Rank: S2 (imperiled) Global Rank: (secure)

What it looks like:

The purple fringeless orchid is a short plant, 3-10 decimeters (about 12-39 inches) tall, bearing loose inflorescences (spikes) of violet to pink flowers. It is thought to be adapted for pollination by daylight-active lepidoptera (moths and butterflies).

Flowers are bilaterally symmetrical, with prominent lower petals deeply divided into three wedge-shaped segments with finely toothed outer edges. The lowermost segment is partially split by a single, central notch. Flowering occurs in July and August.

Leaves are long and narrow, 10-20 cm (about 4-8 in) long at the bottom of the stem and shorter towards the inflorescence.

Photo by Clifford Pelchat, from Digital Flora of Texas

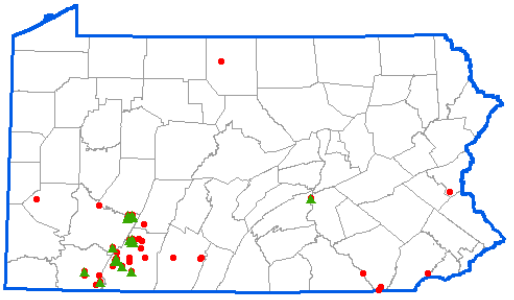
Where it is found:

The purple fringeless orchid grows in open, swampy places – along roads, in forest openings and meadows, and near vernal pools, preferring acidic soil. It is found from Pennsylvania south to Mississippi and west to Arkansas.

Why it is rare:

The orchid's restricted habitat has made it vulnerable to changing land use and forest harvesting or management practices. Changes to its forest habitat have contributed to the species' critically imperiled status across the eastern seaboard and into the southeast of the United States.

Pennsylvania Distribution by County

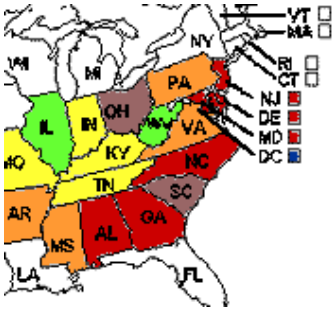


▲ current data • records > 30 years old (1975)

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program data 2005

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

Conservation considerations:

The purple fringeless orchid will benefit most from habitat protection. Forest management strategies should avoid disturbing known populations of the orchid, and forest land containing marshes or vernal pools should be preserved against human interference.

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

References

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