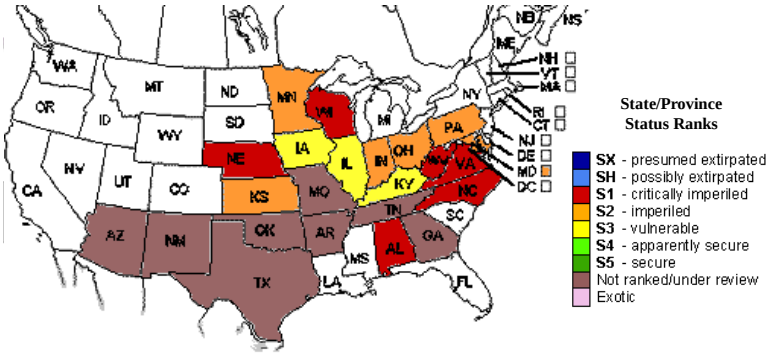
Three-flowered Melic-grass
Melica nitens

Description
Three-flowered melic-grass is a perennial grass that grows from 1½ to 4 feet (5-12 dm) in height. The leaves are alternately arranged, linear, flattened, elongate, 4 to 8 inches (10-20 cm) in length and about 3/8 inch (5-12 mm) in width. The flowers, appearing from late May into July, are grouped in spikelets that are scattered in a branched terminal cluster. The individual spikelets are 3/8 to ½ inch (9-12 mm) in length, contain usually 3 flowers, and tend to hang downward when mature.

Photo source: PNHP

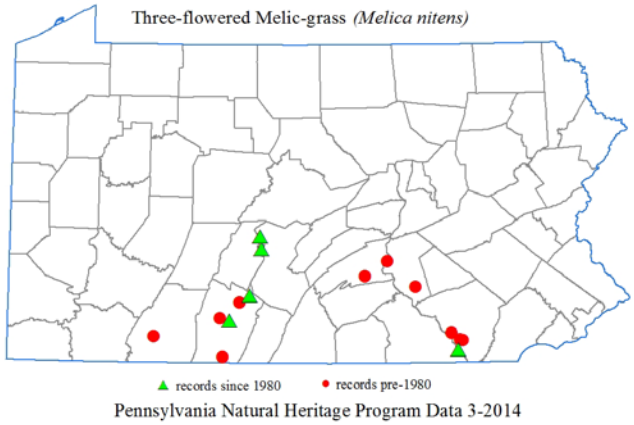
Distribution & Habitat
Three-flowered melic-grass has a distribution from southern Pennsylvania south and west into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, this species reaches a northern border of its known range and has been documented historically in a few southern counties. It grows on cliffs, rock outcrops, rocky slopes and shores, and dry woods.

North American State/Province Conservation Status
Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status
The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers three-flowered melic-grass to be a species of special concern, based on the few occurrences that have been recently confirmed. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Threatened. About 5 populations are currently known from the state.

Pennsylvania Distribution
Three-flowered Melic-grass *(Melica nitens)*



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program Data 3-2014

Conservation Considerations
The known populations of three-flowered melic-grass have threats from natural succession, invasive species, and the indiscriminate application of herbicide. Because of the preference of the species for relatively open habitats, active management, such as fire, mowing, or invasive species removal, may be required to maintain the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for the species to thrive.

NatureServe conservation status ranks
G5 – Secure globally; S2 – Imperiled in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at http://www.natureserve.org/explorer.
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2014.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.