

Oblique Milkvine

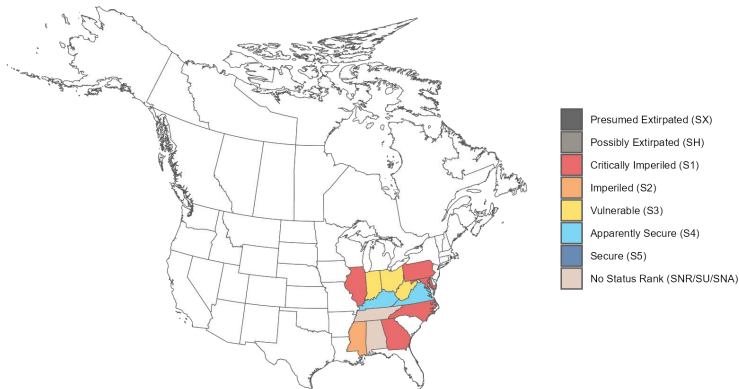
Matelea obliqua

Description

Oblique milkvine is an herbaceous perennial vine that is a member of the milkweed family, so that a broken stem or leaf stalk will reveal a milky sap. The stems are hairy and twining. The leaves are oppositely arranged, broadly oval in outline with heart-shaped bases, with a well-developed leaf stalk, and not toothed on the margin. The flowers, appearing from April to October, are purplish-brown and have 5 petals that are united at their bases. The flowers are held on stalks in small clusters from the leaf axils. The fruits are elongate pods to 3 inches (ca 7 cm) in length, and have scattered warty projections on the outer surface. The individual seeds have elongate hairs.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025

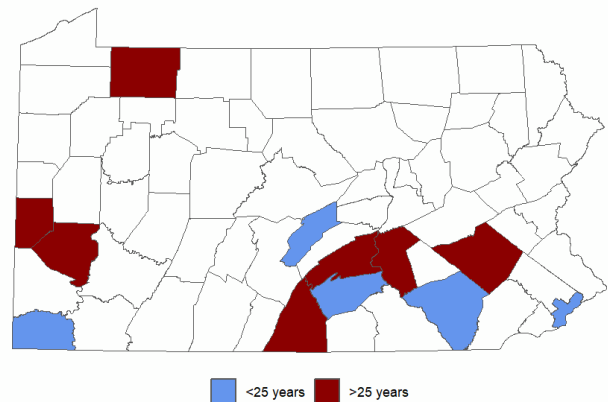


Oblique milkvine (*Matelea obliqua*) flowers

Distribution & Habitat

Oblique milkvine has a range from Pennsylvania south into Georgia and west into Missouri and Mississippi. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in numerous widely-scattered, mostly southern counties. Oblique milkvine grows in open woodlands, woods borders, and thickets, particularly on limestone substrates.

Oblique Milkvine (*Matelea obliqua*)



State Status & Conservation

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) has assigned oblique milkvine a rarity status of Endangered, based on the relatively few populations that have been recently documented and the mostly small population sizes. The known populations have threats from competition, habitat loss, and exotic species, and will generally require some sort of disturbance, such as mowing or fire, in order to maintain the proper successional stage for the species to thrive over the long term.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G4? – Apparently secure globally; S1 – Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. 2025.
- Rhoads, A. F. and W. M. Klein, Jr. 1993. The Vascular Flora of Pennsylvania: Annotated Checklist and Atlas. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- Rhoads, A. F. and T. A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual, Second Edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.