

Hoary Puccoon

Lithospermum canescens

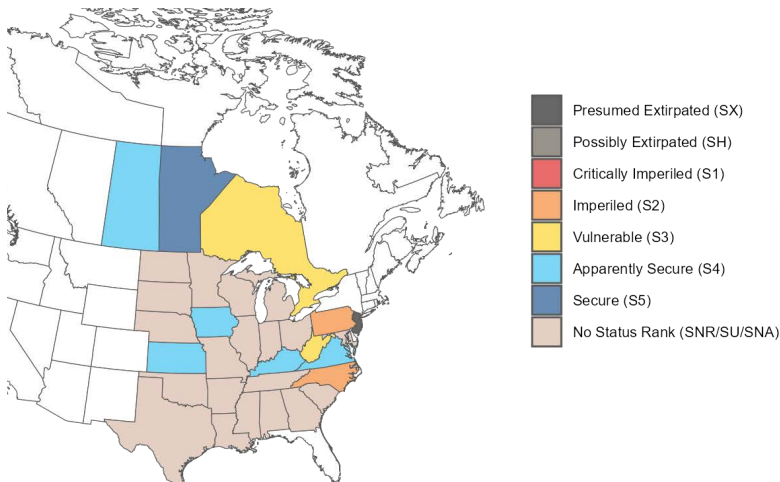
Description

Hoary puccoon is a showy perennial with a stout taproot. It can grow from 4 to 15 inches tall. Short white hairs cover almost all of the plant including the flowers. The genus *Lithospermum* means, “stone-seeded.” Therefore, the seeds, or nutlets produced by this plant are very hard, shiny, and smooth like stones. Leaves are alternate, narrowly oblong, and attach directly to the stem without a petiole. Flowers are grouped in clusters that have a flat or rounded top; however, single blossoms are common. The individual flowers are tubular, with 5 lobes, and about a third of an inch across. They bloom in shades of vibrant yellow and orange from late April through May.



photo source: PNHP

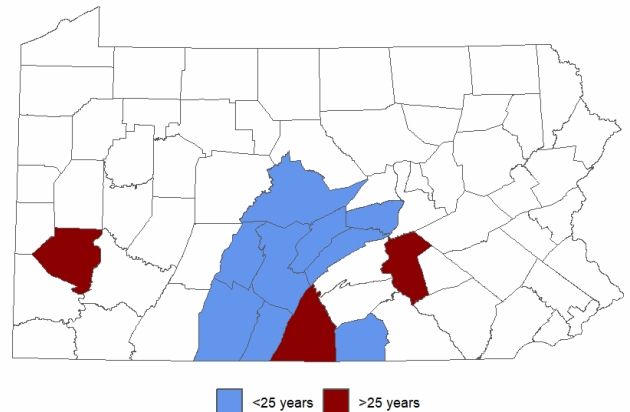
North American State/Province Conservation Status



Habitat

Hoary puccoon is found throughout the Eastern United States. In Pennsylvania, it is found on river bluffs, dry rocky hillsides, and barrens, with a preference for limestone substrate.

Hoary Puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*)



Current State Status

Throughout the range of this species, habitat loss, land conversion for development, and displacement by invasive species have all played a part in its decline. In some cases, the communities where this species grows are themselves rare or have succeeded into a different community types due to the overgrowth of woody species and invasive species. Some of these preferred community types, like the xeric prairies, depend on fire to “weed out” atypical species.

Conservation Considerations

Maintenance of known populations and preservation of the rare communities where hoary puccoon grows will be crucial to its survival. Removal of overgrowth and invasive species with the integration of fire regimes, when appropriate, will help to preserve the integrity of the sites. The management of the known sites requires long term monitoring of populations. Potential sites for restoration should be evaluated.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; **S2** –Imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- Missouri Plants. 2007. Missouri Plants [Web application] <http://www.missouriplants.com> Accessed: February 18, 2007.
- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- Rhoads, Ann and T. Block. 2000. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manuel. Philadelphia: Univ. of PA Press. 267.