

Appalachian Sandwort

Minuartia glabra

Description

Appalachian Sandwort is an annual herb with slender wiry forked stems that may grow up to 6 inches (15 cm) in height. The leaves are oppositely arranged, linear to needle-like in shape, to 1 inch (2.5 cm) in length and 1/16 inch (1-2 mm) in width, and hairless. The white flowers, which appear mostly from May to July but sporadically later in the year, are aggregated in small branching clusters on the upper portions of the stems. Each individual flower has 5 petals that are about 3/16 inch (4-8 mm) in length. The fruit is a dry capsule about 3/16 inch (5 mm) in diameter that splits into 3 parts and releases the minute seeds.



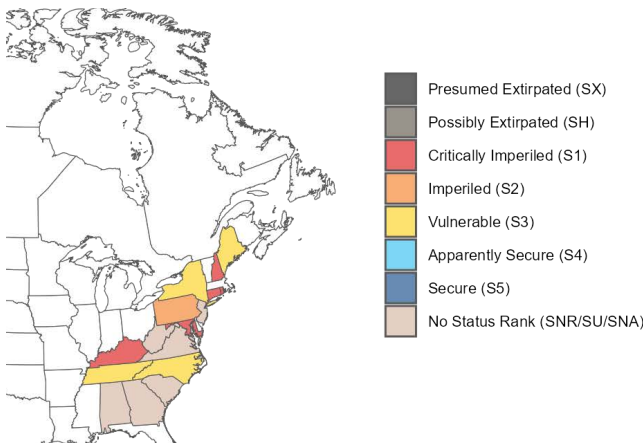
Photo source: PNHP

Distribution & Habitat

Appalachian Sandwort ranges from New England south into Georgia and Alabama. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in the northeastern counties. The species grows on open well drained sandstone and shale bedrock outcrops and in dry open woods.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



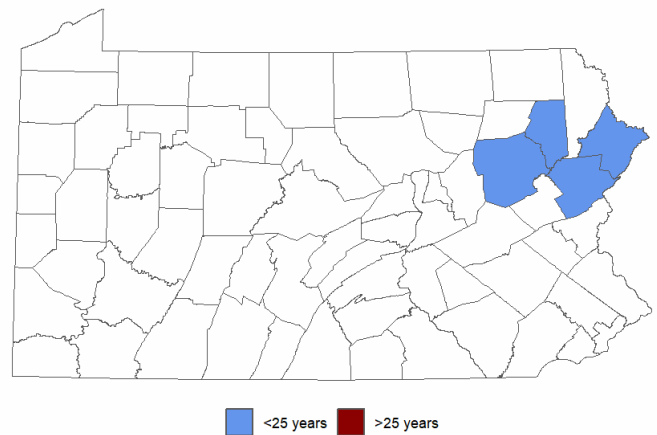
Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Appalachian Sandwort to be a species of special concern, based on the few locations that have been recently confirmed and the specialized habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Threatened.

Conservation Considerations

The largest populations of Appalachian Sandwort are situated in remote areas where the habitat is likely to be kept in a natural state. Active management, such as the use of prescribed fire, may be beneficial in maintaining these areas or in creating additional habitat. Some populations are threatened by loss of habitat.

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NatureServe conservation status ranks

G4 – Globally apparently secure; **S2** – 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. 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.