

Grooved Yellow Flax

Linum sulcatum

Description

Grooved yellow flax is an erect annual herb that grows up to 2½ feet (75 cm) tall. The common name refers to its grooved stems which are purplish near the base. The leaves grow alternately along the stem. They are linear to oblong, have smooth margins, and attach directly to the stem without a petiole. There are two distinctive blackish glands on the stem near the base of each leaf. The flowers are yellow, have 5 smooth petals, and are roughly ½ inch (1-2 cm) wide. They are held in loose clusters near the top of the stem and bloom from May to September.

Distribution & Habitat

Grooved yellow flax occurs in the U. S. from New Hampshire and Vermont south to Florida and west to North Dakota through Texas. In Pennsylvania, it can be found growing in scattered sites on sandy barrens.

Current State Status

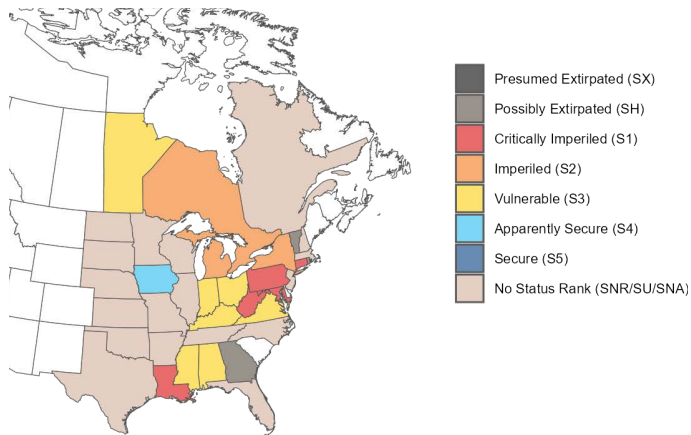
The PA Biological Survey considers the grooved yellow flax to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been confirmed and the very specialized habitat. It has been assigned a rarity status of Endangered. Grooved yellow flax populations are threatened by habitat loss and succession. Over time, the open nature of the habitats required by this species may be lost due to encroachment by woody and invasive species. Other potential hazards include trampling, incompatible land management, and habitat fragmentation, which limits seed dispersal.



photo source: Robert W. Freckmann
Herbarium, UWSP
Merel L. Black

North American State/Province Conservation Status

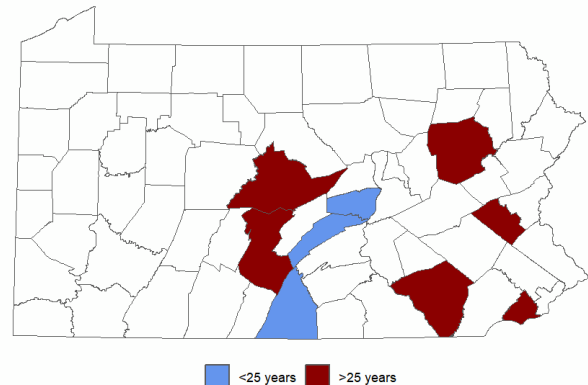
Map by NatureServe 2025



Conservation Considerations

Maintenance of known populations and preservation of the sandy barrens communities where grooved yellow flax 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 open nature of the sites. The management of the known sites requires long term monitoring of populations. Potential sites for restoration should be evaluated.

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NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally Secure; **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. 2000. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.