

Upright Primrose Willow

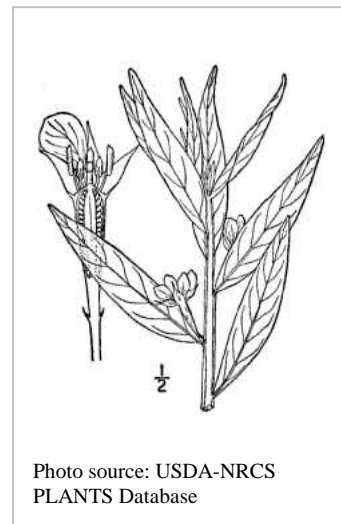
Ludwigia decurrens

Description

Upright primrose willow is an annual herb with hairless, square stems that may grow up to 6½ feet (2 meters) tall. The leaves are alternately arranged, lance-shaped or linear, and the margins are untoothed. The leaf bases extend downward along the stem and create a raised line or “wing.” The flowers, appearing from July to September, are about one inch (2.5 cm) in width and have 4 yellow petals and 8 stamens. The fruit is a many-seeded capsule that is more-or-less four-sided. Despite its common name, the plant is not a true willow but a member of the evening-primrose family.

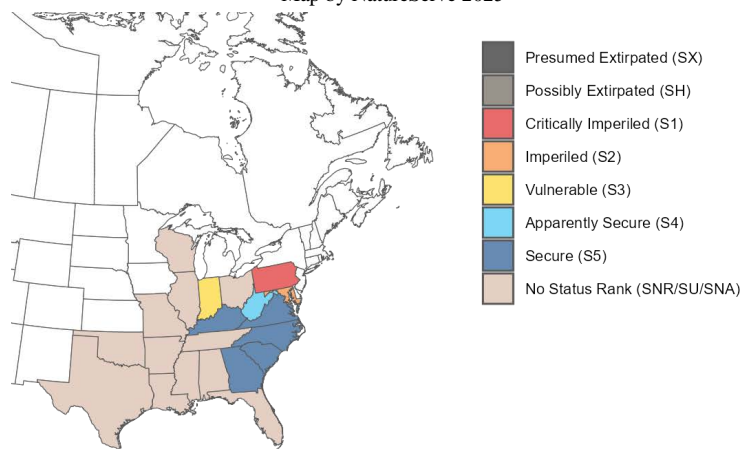
Distribution & Habitat

Upright primrose willow has a range from southeastern Pennsylvania west into Wisconsin and south into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, it reaches the known northern limit of its range and has been found only in Lancaster County, where it inhabits shoreline areas of the Susquehanna River.



North American State/Province Conservation Status

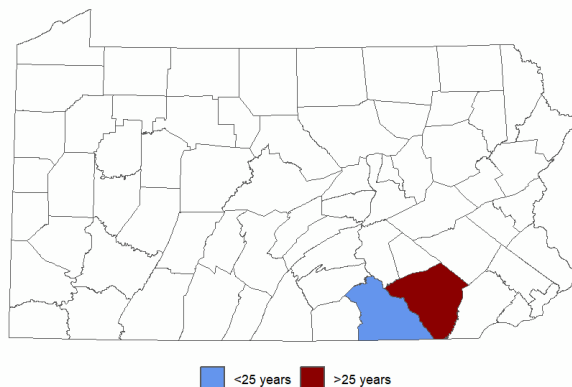
Map by NatureServe 2025



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers upright primrose willow to be a species of special concern, based on the single occurrence that has been confirmed, its very small state range, and its wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered. At present, it is only known from Lancaster County.

Upright Primrose-willow (*Ludwigia decurrens*)



Conservation Considerations

Upright primrose willow is a southerly species that appears to be expanding its range to the north. It was first documented in Pennsylvania in 1987 and may become more frequent in the state in the future. The viability of the single known occurrence can be enhanced by maintaining the natural seasonal fluctuations in the water levels and the natural condition of the shoreline and islands of the Susquehanna River. Invasive species represent a threat to its habitat.

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)
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia
- USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Vol. 1: 20.