

Jacob's-ladder (*Polemonium vanbruntiae*)

Phlox Family (Polemoniaceae)

Pennsylvania Endangered Plant Species

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G3G4 (vulnerable)

SIGNIFICANCE

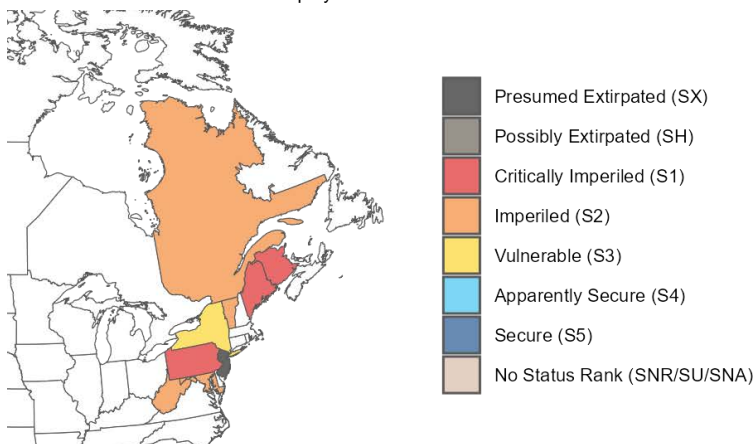
The Jacob's-ladder has been given a status of Endangered on the Plants of Special Concern in Pennsylvania list by the Pennsylvania Biological Survey and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, based on the relatively few populations that have been documented in the state. It is considered a globally rare species by the Natural Heritage Program.

DESCRIPTION

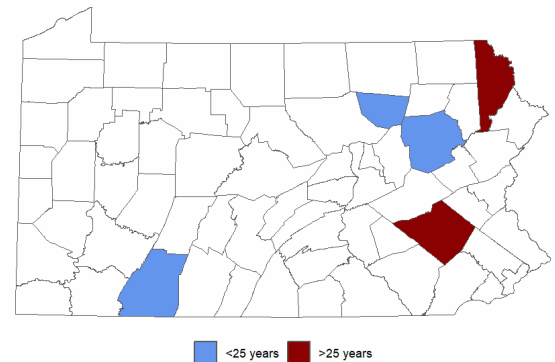
The Jacob's-ladder is a perennial herb to three feet in height. The leaves are alternately arranged and divided into numerous leaflets with entire margins. The individual flowers, appearing in late June and early July, have blue petals and protruding stamens and style. The fruit is a many-seeded capsule. A more common and widespread species, *Polemonium reptans*, is similar but is smaller in size, has the stamens and style not protruding from the flower, has more of a woodland habitat, and blooms in spring.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Jacob's-ladder (*Polemonium vanbruntiae*)



HABITAT

The species grows in wet soil in woods, thickets and openings.

RANGE

The Jacob's-ladder is found in northeastern North America from southern Canada to West Virginia. It is known historically from several widely scattered occurrences in Pennsylvania, although all of the currently known populations are in the northeastern part of the state.

REFERENCES

- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025) Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources web site (www.dcnr.state.pa.us)
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2000. The plants of Pennsylvania: an illustrated manual. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA
- Rhoads, A.F. and W.M. Klein, Jr.. 1993. The vascular flora of Pennsylvania: annotated checklist and atlas. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA

