

GREAT-SPURRED VIOLET; SELKIRK'S VIOLET (*Viola selkirkii*)

Violet Family (Violaceae)

Plant Species of Concern

State Rank: S3S4 (vulnerable), Global Rank: G5 (secure)

SIGNIFICANCE

The great-spurred violet has been given a proposed status of Undetermined 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 historical and recent records that have been documented in the state. More field work is needed in order to determine if the species should be of conservation concern. The plant is very easily overlooked due to its small size and similarity to more common species of violets.

DESCRIPTION

The great-spurred violet is a perennial herb that may grow to a few inches in height. The general appearance is similar to other species of violets, but the great-spurred violet can be distinguished by its smaller size, the heart shaped leaves (with a tendency for the basal lobes of some leaves to overlap) with minute hairs on the upper surface and few to no hairs on the lower surface, and the small violet-colored flowers with hairless lateral petals (contrasting with other species of violets that have a tuft of hairs, or "beard", on the lateral petals), and rather prominent spur of the middle petal.



HABITAT

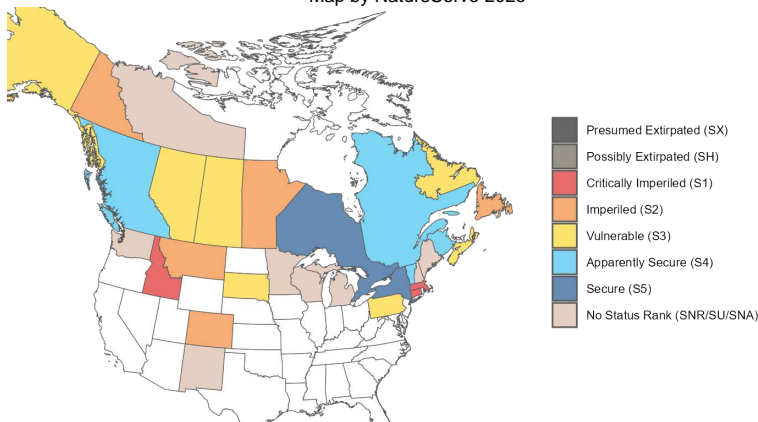
The species inhabits moist woods throughout its range, particularly on calcareous or limestone substrates. In Pennsylvania, it grows in cool, moist woods, often on humusy or mossy rock outcrops and boulders.

RANGE

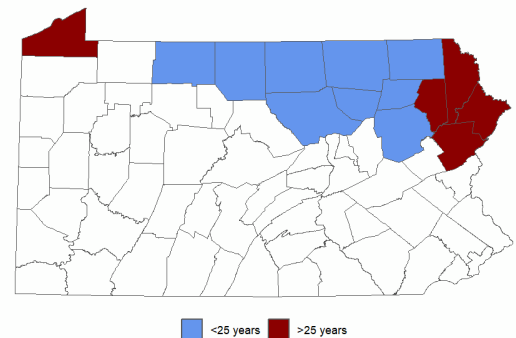
The great-spurred violet occurs in the more northern and cooler parts of North America. The historical range in Pennsylvania is concentrated in the northeastern counties and the species apparently reaches a southern border of its range in the state.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Great-spurred Violet (*Viola selkirkii*)



REFERENCES

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