

Autumn Bluegrass

Poa autumnalis

Description

Autumn Bluegrass is a perennial herb with a slender hairless stem that may grow to 2 feet (60 cm) in height. The leaves are alternately arranged, linear in shape, not toothed on the margin, parallel-veined, up to 6 inches (15 cm) in length and 1/16 inch (2-3 mm) in width, and pointed at the tip. The flowers, appearing in May and June, are individually only a few millimeters in length. They are grouped in an open branched cluster at the top of the stem, with the main lower branches of the cluster tending to be arranged in pairs or occurring singly along the stem. Despite the common name, this species flowers and fruits in spring.

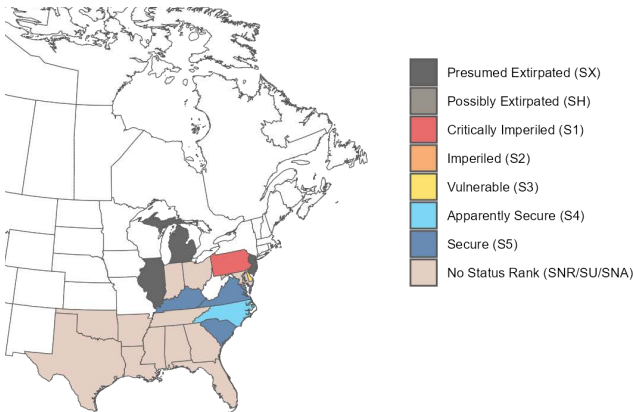


Photo source: Ann Rhoads, Morris Arboretum

Autumn bluegrass (*Poa autumnalis*) seed head

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



State Status & Conservation

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) has assigned Autumn Bluegrass a rarity status of Endangered, based on the relatively few populations that are documented and the small state range. Some populations are threatened by habitat loss and exotic species.

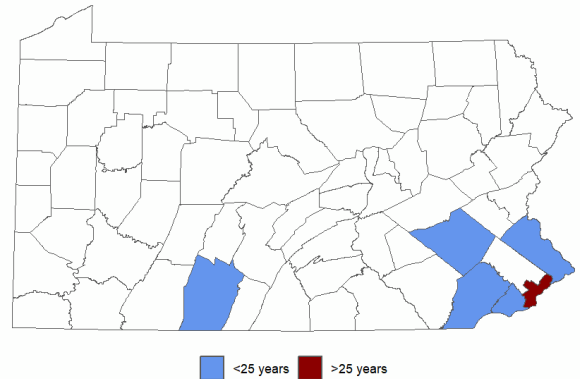
NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 —Globally Secure; **S1** — Critically Imperiled in Pennsylvania

Distribution & Habitat

Autumn Bluegrass has a range from New Jersey west into Michigan and south into Florida and Texas. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in several southeastern counties. Autumn Bluegrass grows in moist woods and on stream banks and slopes.

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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.