

White Thoroughwort

Eupatorium album

Description

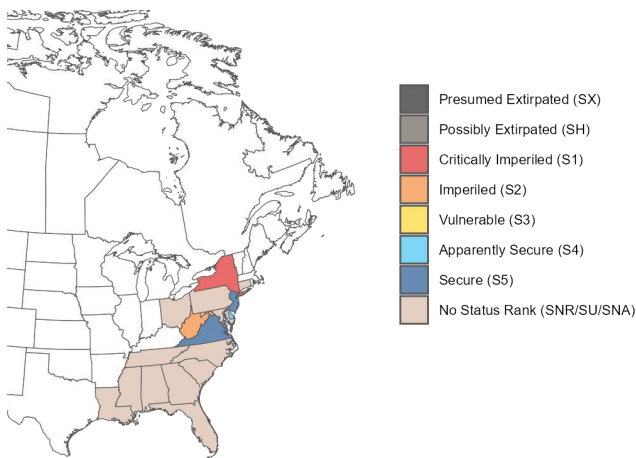
White Thoroughwort is an herbaceous perennial with a hairy stem that may grow to 3 feet (1 m) in height. The leaves are oppositely arranged, unstalked or nearly so, narrowly elliptic to lance-shaped, with 3 prominent veins oriented from base to tip, toothed on the margin, resin-dotted and more-or-less hairy, to 4 inches (10 cm) in length and to 1 inch (2.5 cm) in width, and obtuse to rounded at the tip. The white flowers, appearing from August to October, are individually minute and are aggregated in small clusters (“heads”) at the tips of the branches, which tend to reach the same height and give the overall plant a flat-topped appearance. Each individual head has numerous overlapping white and hairy scales, or bracts, below where the flowers are attached. In this species the bracts of the head, especially the upper ones, have an exceptionally long and pointed white tip as compared with the lower bracts, a feature not found in most of the other species of the genus *Eupatorium*. The fruits are minute, dry, and 1-seeded, with a tuft of hairs at the tip that promotes wind dispersal.



Photo source: John Kunsman, PNHP

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



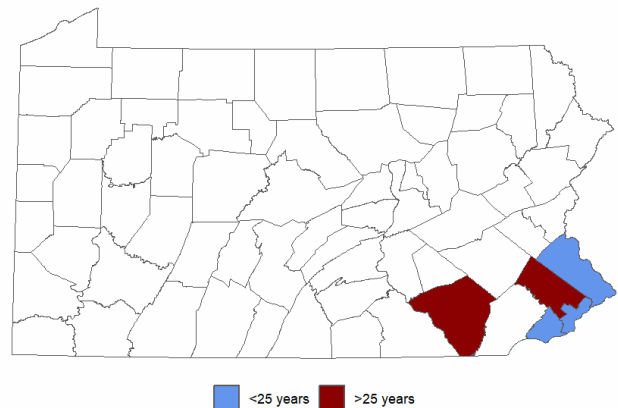
Distribution & Habitat

White Thoroughwort ranges from Connecticut to Indiana and south into Florida and Louisiana. In Pennsylvania, it represents a southerly species and has been documented historically in the southeastern counties. It grows in openings, clearings, rights-of-way, thickets, and open woods.

Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers White Thoroughwort to be a species of special concern, based on the very few locations that have been recently confirmed. It has a PA legal rarity status of Extirpated, but has been assigned a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered since the species was recently documented as still occurring in the state.

White Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium album*)



Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of White Thoroughwort often requires maintaining early successional conditions and controlling invasive species. Active management, such as periodic mowing, may be needed to create the proper successional stage and ecological conditions for this species to thrive.

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. 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.