



New Jersey Field Office

Northeast Region

NJ Field Office
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Small Whorled Pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*) [threatened]

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IN BRIEF

Habitat:
Upland forests

Main Threats:
Habitat destruction
Recreational activities
Collection

Fun Fact:
Small whorled pogonia is a type of orchid.

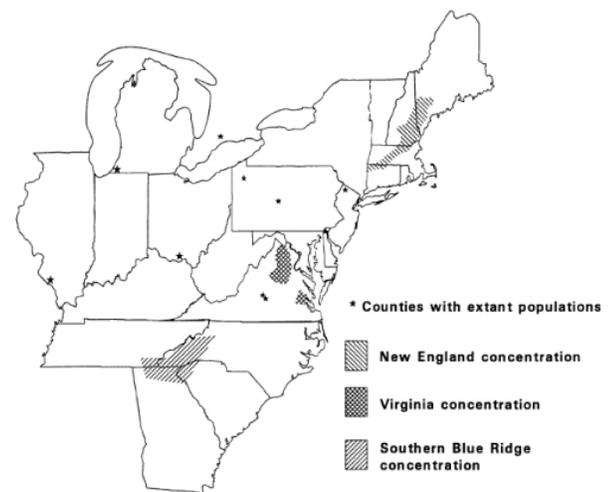


Overview

Small whorled pogonia was federally listed as an endangered species in 1982, and reclassified as a threatened species in 1993.

A perennial member of the orchid family, small whorled pogonia produces a smooth, hollow stem from 2 to 14 inches tall and topped by five or six leaves in a circular arrangement (false whorl). One or two flowers stand in the center of the whorl of leaves. The leaves are milky-green or grayish-green, and the flower is yellowish-green with a greenish-white lip. In the northern part of the species' range, plants with flowering buds emerge from the leaf litter in May and bloom in June.

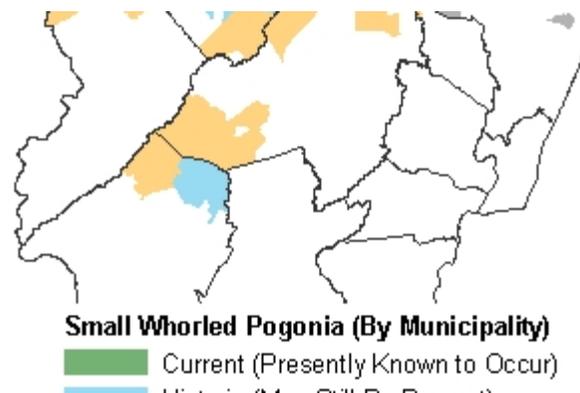
Small whorled pogonia grows in a variety of upland, mid-successional, wooded habitats, usually mixed-deciduous or mixed-deciduous/coniferous forests that are in second or third-growth successional stages. Canopy trees are typically 40 to 75 years old and 8 to 18 inches in diameter. Characteristics of this species' habitat include a sparse herb



Distribution of small whorled pogonia in the US.
(Click image for full-size)



and shrub layer, a relatively open understory canopy, thick leaf litter on the forest floor, and gently sloping ground. Soils in which small whorled pogonia grows are generally acidic and dry during most of the growing season. Many sites where this plant occurs are underlain by soils with a hardpan layer that impedes the downward flow of water and leads to the formation of shallow braided channels on the ground surface. Small whorled pogonia is almost always found in proximity to features that create long-persisting breaks in the forest canopy: light availability could be a limiting



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