



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species

Midwest Region

Midwest Endangered
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Price's Potato-bean (*Apios priceana*)



Potato bean tubers were food items for both Native Americans and European pioneers.

Status: Threatened

Habitat: This plant prefers lightly disturbed areas such as forest openings, wood edges and where bluffs descend to streams. It also grows along highway rights-of-way and powerline corridors. >

Why It's Threatened: Never a very common species due to its exacting habitat requirements, only 13 populations of the plant are known to exist today. These are threatened by cattle which graze and trample on the plant. Timber clearcutting destroys its habitat and herbicides applied to highway rights-of-way kill individual populations of the plant. Almost half the known populations have disappeared in recent years. None are now found within our 8-state region.

Paradoxically, in some areas, lack of forest clearing is threatening the potato-bean. A species that depends on natural disturbance, the potato-bean is, in some places, being eliminated as surrounding forest closes in over the plants. This creates habitat for shade-loving plants that crowd out the potato-bean. Selective cutting at some sites may be necessary, therefore, to save these populations. With 10 of the 13 populations occurring on private lands and none made up of more than 50 plants, the voluntary cooperation of landowners will be necessary to save this species.

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