

Beautiful Barbara's Buttons (*Marshallia pulchra*)

Pennsylvania Endangered

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G3 (vulnerable)

What it looks like:

Beautiful Barbara's buttons is a 20 to 90 centimeter perennial herb growing singly or in clusters from a low caudex, or woody base.

Leaves are narrowly oblong and tapering, with three parallel veins. Near the bottom of the stem each leaf has a short petiole, but farther up they are attached directly to the main stem.

Flowers are small, white or pale purple, and tubular, clustered in disc-shaped heads at the apex of each main stem.

Where it is found:

Beautiful Barbara's buttons grows in wet forests or meadows and on stream banks throughout central Appalachia – from Pennsylvania south to Tennessee. Historically, it also grew in North Carolina, but it seems to have been extirpated from that state; it is expected to occur in Maryland, but no populations have been documented. It tolerates partial shade, but flowers best in direct sunlight, and is most commonly found in habitat that has been scoured by flooding.

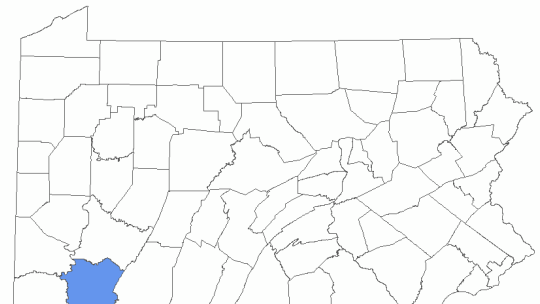


Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Why it is rare:

Beautiful Barbara's buttons is known to occur in only 11 watersheds within its range, and many of these watershed-wide occurrences are really collections of several very small, widely scattered populations. A few watersheds in West Virginia have populations totaling in the thousands, but these are threatened by flood control projects.

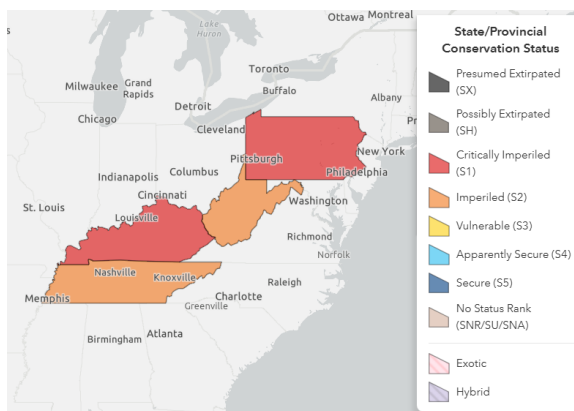
Beautiful Barbara's-Buttons (*Marshallia pulchra*)



■ <25 years ■ >25 years

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

References

- Gleason, Henry A. and Arthur Cronquist. 1991. *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*. Second ed. New York: The New York Botanical Garden. 543.
- NatureServe. 2025. NatureServe Explorer [web application] NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <https://explorer.natureserve.org> (Accessed: May 8, 2025)
- United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2005. The PLANTS Database [web application]. National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA. Available at <http://plants.usda.gov>.