

# Creeping Snowberry

## *Gaultheria hispidula*

### Description

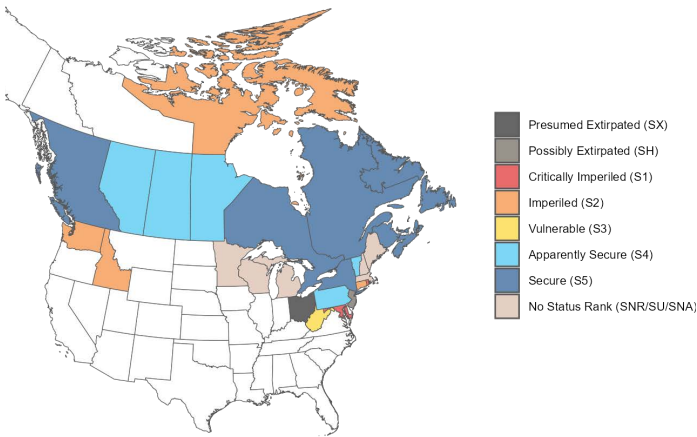
Creeping Snowberry is a low-growing, matlike, evergreen shrub. All parts of the plant have a wintergreen odor when bruised. The plant may be recognized in any season by its growing habit and its leaves. The leaves are alternately arranged, mostly less than 3/8 inch (1 cm) in length, egg-shaped or rounded, very short-stalked, hairless above and with scattered brownish hairs below. The plants produce flowers and fruits, but these can be a challenge to locate. The flowers, which appear in spring, are greenish/white, only a few millimeters in length, and occur singly along the stem. The fruit is white, berry-like but rather dry, contains many seeds, and is the source of the common name.



Photo Source: John Kunsman (PNHP)

### North American State/Province Conservation Status

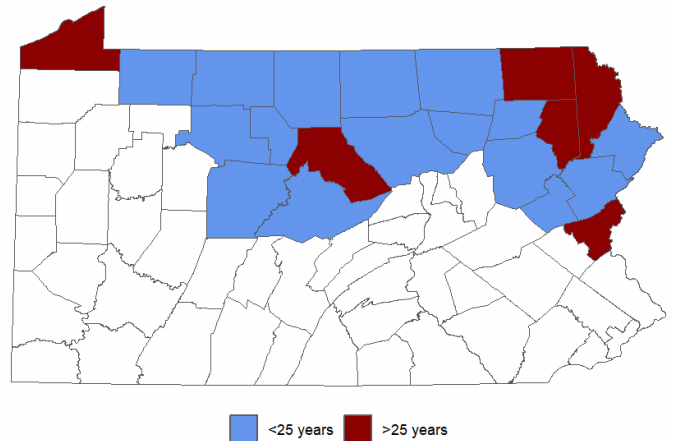
Map by NatureServe 2025



### Distribution & Habitat

Creeping Snowberry has a transcontinental range across the cooler regions of North America. In Pennsylvania, it represents a northerly species and has been documented historically in the northern counties. The species grows on decaying logs, stumps, and moss hummocks in bogs, peaty wetlands, and swamps.

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### Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Creeping Snowberry to be a species of special concern, based on the moderate number of locations recently confirmed and the wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Rare.

### Conservation Considerations

The viability of populations of Creeping Snowberry and its habitat may be enhanced by creating buffers and protecting the natural hydrology around wetlands and controlling invasive species.

### NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S4 – Apparently secure 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. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.