

# Labrador-tea

## *Rhododendron groenlandicum*

### Description

Labrador-tea is an evergreen shrub that may grow to 3 feet (1 m) in height, but often is much smaller and even may be only a few inches in some situations. The branchlets are densely covered with orange or brown woolly hairs. The leaves are alternately arranged, generally elliptic in shape, to 2 inches (5 cm) in length, untoothed on the margin with the latter tending to be curled under, and when mature (young leaves have white colored hairs) have the upper side green and the lower side densely covered with the same sort of hairs as on the branchlets. The white flowers, appearing in May and June, are about 3/8 inch (1 cm) in width and have five petals. The fruit is a cylindrical-shaped capsule about 1/4 inch (5-7 mm) in length that splits at its base at maturity and contains many small seeds.



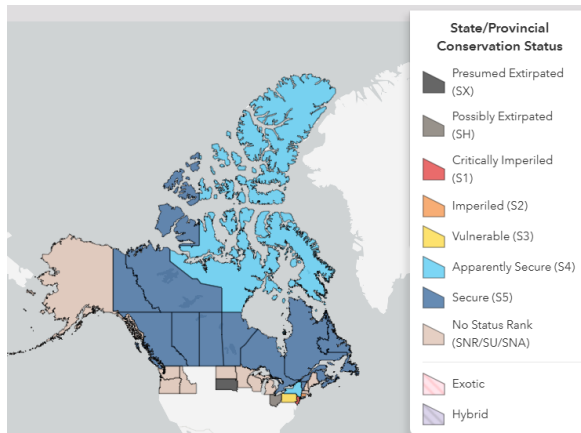
Photo source: (PNHP)

### Distribution & Habitat

Labrador-tea has a transcontinental range across the cooler regions of northern North America. In Pennsylvania, it represents a northerly species and has been documented historically in the northern, particularly the northeastern, counties. The species grows in bogs and peaty wetlands.

### North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025



### Conservation Considerations

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

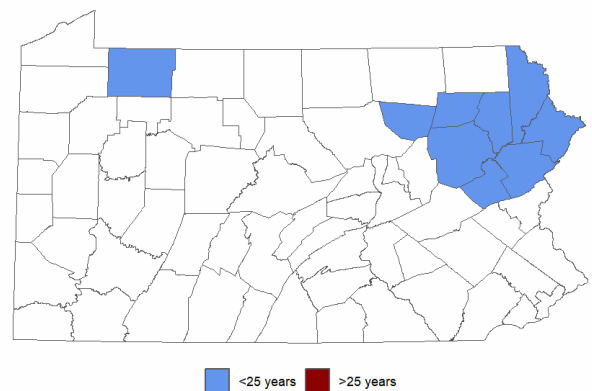
### NatureServe conservation status ranks

**G5** – Globally secure; **S3** – Vulnerable in Pennsylvania

### Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey (PABS) considers Labrador-tea 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.

Common Labrador-tea (*Rhododendron groenlandicum*)



### 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.