

Glade Spurge

Euphorbia purpurea

Description

Glade spurge is a perennial herb with a hairless stem that may grow up to 3 feet (ca 1 m) in height. A milky sap is present in the stem and leaves. The leaves are alternately arranged, lance-shaped to narrowly oblong, hairless, untoothed on the margin, and 2 to 4 inches (5-10 cm) in length. The flowers, appearing in May or June, are arranged in flat-topped clusters that are subtended by leaf-like bracts that are much shorter and broader than the stem leaves. The fruit is a warty-surfaced capsule that contains 3 smooth seeds.

Distribution & Habitat

Glade spurge has a relatively small range from New Jersey into Ohio, and south into North Carolina. In Pennsylvania, it has been documented historically in some southcentral and southeastern counties. It grows in seepages, swamps, bottomlands and on streambanks.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe 2025

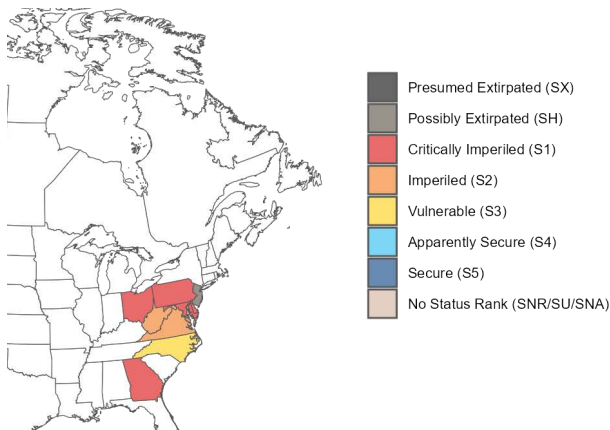


Photo source: R. Harrison Wiegand

Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey considers glade spurge to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently documented, small global range, and wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered. Fewer than 10 populations, most of them with only a few individuals, are currently known from the state.

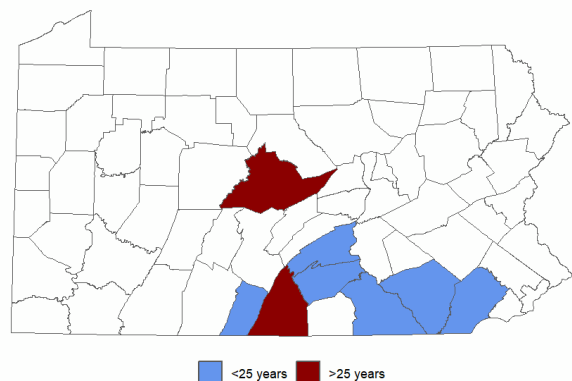
Conservation Considerations

The viability of the known populations of glade spurge and its habitat may be enhanced by establishing buffers around wetlands, controlling invasive species, and protecting the natural hydrology surrounding wetlands. This species may be impacted by excessive browsing by deer in some locations.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G3 – Vulnerable globally; S1– Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

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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 T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.