

# Let's Protect New Jersey's Rare Plants



## Support the Creation of the **New Jersey Native Plant Protection Act**

Did you know that even though New Jersey has a list of rare and endangered plant species, these plants are *not* yet protected by state law?

### What is New Jersey's Natural Botanical Heritage?

New Jersey is geographically and botanically diverse, with more than 2100 native plant species. Approximately 16% of these species are now at risk for extinction in the state and 39% are considered imperiled to some degree. At least 32 plant species have already been extirpated.

Thirty plant species are known from only a single population occurrence in the state and 52 species are globally rare. Some of these species exist *only* in NJ.

### Threats to New Jersey's Rare and Endangered Plants:

Habitat loss or degradation through development and urbanization is the number one cause of rare and endangered plant decline in NJ. Other threats include agriculture, pollution, invasive species, overcollection, and ecological succession in the absence of natural disturbance processes (i.e. wildfires). Seventy-four percent of endangered plant species have populations located outside of state-protected lands, making them especially vulnerable.

### Why Protect New Jersey's Rare Plants and Ecological Communities?

In addition to its inherent value to us and to our landscape, plant diversity is a critical component of overall biodiversity. Biodiversity drives the complex interactions within our ecosystem that provide us with food, maintenance of water and air quality, waste decomposition and soil generation, nutrient cycling, pollination services, natural pest control, climate stabilization, flood and erosion control, and medicines and pharmaceuticals. Losing just one or a few "parts" of an ecosystem could cause the cascading collapse of the whole.

Many other states have legislation protecting their native rare plants. New Jersey lags behind this trend.

### To Support this Effort:

Visit <http://www.pinelandsalliance.org/protection/hotissues/ecological/rareplantprotection/> for additional details or call (609) 859-8860 ext.23.

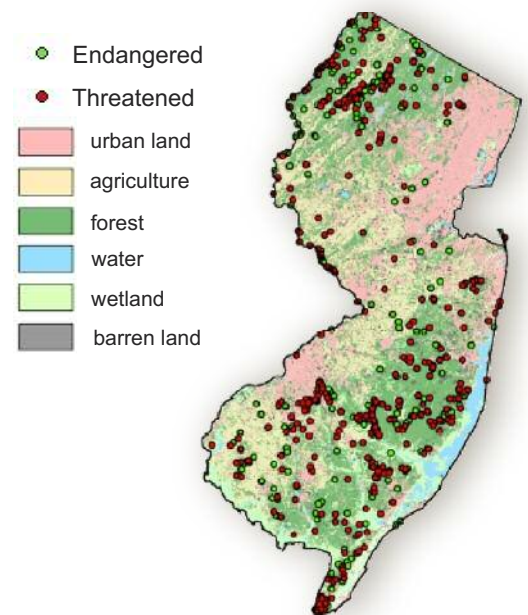
#### References:

Breden, T.F., J.M. Hartman, M. Anzelone and J.F. Kelly. 2006. Endangered Plant Species Populations in New Jersey: Health and Threats. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry, Office of Natural Lands Management, Natural Heritage Program, Trenton, NJ.

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### We Need a Better Law:

Current legislation requires that only a list be created of plants classified as "endangered" and "species of concern." It does not require that these plants be protected. Our plan calls for the creation of the **New Jersey Native Plant Protection Act**, in which endangered and threatened plant species, as well as rare ecological communities, are to be legally protected. This legislation will afford New Jersey plants protections similar to those already in place for wildlife.



### Existing Endangered and Threatened Plant Populations

Adapted from Breden et al. 2006; NJDEP; Rutgers University

# Organizations Supporting a New Jersey Native Plant Protection Act April 2013

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions  
American Littoral Society  
Audubon Wildlife Society  
D&R Greenway Land Trust  
Ecological Solutions, LLC  
Edison Greenways Group, Inc.  
Environment New Jersey  
Forked River Mountain Coalition  
Friends for the Hamilton-Trenton-Bordentown Marsh  
Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space  
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association  
Greater Newark Conservancy  
Haddon Township Environmental Commission  
Highlands Coalition  
Jakes Branch County Park, Ocean County Dept of Parks and Recreation  
Kingston Greenways Association  
Master Gardeners of Burlington County  
Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy  
Musconetcong Watershed Association  
New Jersey Audubon Society  
New Jersey Conservation Foundation  
New Jersey Sierra Club  
North American Butterfly Association, North Jersey Chapter  
NY/NJ Baykeeper  
Pinelands Native Plant Nursery  
Pinelands Preservation Alliance  
Rancocas Conservancy  
Rutgers University Ecology & Evolution Graduate Student Association  
Saddler's Woods Conservation Association  
South Jersey Land and Water Trust  
The Native Plant Society of New Jersey  
The Nature Conservancy  
Union Forge Heritage Association  
Washington Crossing Audubon Society  
Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge