



SPECIAL PLANTS OF
NEW JERSEY

factsheet

Trailing Tick-Trefoil

Scientific Name: *Desmodium humifusum*

State-listed: Endangered

Federally-listed: None

State Conservation Rank: S1

Global Conservation Rank: G1G2Q

Description/Identification Tips: Herbaceous perennial in the legume family (Fabaceae). Stems trailing or prostrate, 1 to 2 m long, hairy. Leaves alternate, pinnately 3-foliolate, leaflets hairy on both sides. Small purple pea-like flowers, 7-9 mm, on pedicels to 9 mm.

Range: MA and NY south to MD; IN.

Best Time to See: Blooms in July and August.

Habitat: Open, sunny woods with sandy acidic soils and dry-mesic forests dominated by oaks and pines. May also occur along powerline cuts.

Management: Plants may benefit from prescribed burning.

Needs: Searches for unknown occurrences. Other needs include characterization of plant-animal interactions (pollination, herbivory) and nitrogen-fixing symbionts. Precise counts of plants in each population with measurements of reproductive output.

Comments: This species could be a hybrid of two other *Desmodium* species. Its habitat happens to be good land for home building and off-road vehicle activity, which contribute to its decline.

References: Gleason and Cronquist 1991; Dolan/USDA Forest Service Eastern Region 2004; Center for Plant Conservation 2010; NatureServe 2010; USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database 2011.

— Ecological Interactions —

* The fruits of Trailing Tick-Trefoil are hairy and can stick to animal fur and clothing like velcro. This allows the plant to be dispersed over long distances.



NJ Natural Heritage
Program Data: August
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Current and Historically
Documented Records