



SPECIAL PLANTS OF  
NEW JERSEY

factsheet

## Wild Bleeding-Heart

Scientific Name: *Dicentra eximia*

State-listed: Endangered

Federally-listed: None

State Conservation Rank: SH.1

Global Conservation Rank: G4

**Description/Identification Tips:** Perennial, rhizomatous herbaceous plant in the fumitory family (Fumariaceae). Leaves up to 40 cm long, finely divided, light green and resembling a fern. Flowers white to a deep, magenta red, with short, rounded spurs, occurring in heart shaped racemes and drooping in clusters from a leafless, fleshy stem.

**Range:** NJ and PA south to GA; introductions to other eastern states.

**Best Time to See:** Blooms from late March until the first frosts in early October.

**Habitat:** Dry or moist mountain woods; rich, rocky soils and cliff-sides.

**Management:** Protection of this species' uncommon rocky habitat and prevention of over-harvest and exploitation by collectors.

**Needs:** Surveys of historical and new populations in NJ. This species is only common in VA and WV and populations in other states need further research to determine how to protect them.

**Comments:** This species was discovered by J.L. Edwards on Mount Tammany, Warren County, in 1933. It was confirmed extant by V. Abraytis in 1963, but has not been seen since the construction of nearby Route 80. It is possibly extirpated in NJ.

**References:** Gleason and Cronquist 1991; Snyder 1993; Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center 2010; NatureServe 2010; USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database 2011.

### — Ecological Interactions —

\* The small black seeds of Wild Bleeding-Heart have attached a fleshy structure, called an elaiosome, which is rich in fat. This fat is a prized food item for ants, which collect the seeds to bring back to the nest. The elaiosome is eaten and the seed is discarded unharmed, able to germinate far from the parent plant. This dispersal mutualism between plants and ants is called "myrmecochory".



NJ Natural Heritage  
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Current and Historically  
Documented Records