

ANTENNARIA VIRGINICA Stebbins
Shale Barren Pussy-toes

FAMILY: Asteraceae

HABIT: Tufted perennial from tough, elongate rhizomes; stoloniferous; flowering stems to 1 dm.; flowering and fruiting late April-early May.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Very similar to two other common pussy-toes, *Antennaria neglecta* and *A. neodioica*. These species do not grow with colonies of *A. virginica*, but they occur frequently in eastern Ohio in similar habitats. These three species can only be distinguished with certainty when in flower or fruit. They differ in technical details of the stolons, the basal leaves, and the involucre.

TOTAL RANGE: Endemic to a limited area of the Appalachians from south-central PA to sw. VA; also to KY and se. WV; disjunct in east-central OH.

STATE RANGE: Post-1980 populations have been found only in Carroll, Columbiana, and Jefferson counties.

HABITAT: In full sun on banks of calcareous shales; known Ohio populations are on west or south facing exposures; may be locally common in suitable situations.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by taller forbs or woody vegetation.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but possibly good due to its stoloniferous habit.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens in flower or fruit; sterile material cannot be identified with certainty.

COMMENTS: This species has been considered an endemic of the Appalachian shale barrens. The Ohio populations, though disjunct from the major part of the total range, are in habitats that are geologically and ecologically similar to the barrens further east. These habitats are of very limited geographic extent in the state and their flora is poorly known. Although *Antennaria virginica* is difficult to distinguish from other species of the genus, it is unlikely that this species is widespread in eastern Ohio. The shale habitat of this species is severely threatened by strip mining of coal in eastern Ohio. Also, through time the habitat changes as grasses and sumacs overtop the pussy-toes. If any barrens would be protected, management probably would be required. However, the type of management needed is not understood at present. Succession on Appalachian barrens should be studied to learn techniques for managing the Ohio barrens.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Bayer, R.J. and G.L. Stebbins. 1982. A revised classification of *Antennaria* (Asteraceae: Inuleae) of the eastern United States. *Syst. Bot.* 7: 300-313.

Keener, C.S. 1983. Distribution and biohistory of the endemic flora of the Mid-Appalachian shale barrens. *Bot. Rev.* 49: 65-115.



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