

ASTER ACUMINATUS Michx.
Mountain Aster

FAMILY: Compositae (Asteraceae)

HABIT: Perennial herb to 1 m. from a slender, running rhizome; flowering July-September; fruiting August-September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This species is the most distinctive of all Ohio asters. It can be recognized by the unusual combination of running rhizome, whorled leaves, and few, large flowers.

TOTAL RANGE: N. F. and Que. to s. Ont., s. to NJ and PA and s. in the mts. to n. GA and TN.

STATE RANGE: There are pre-1980 records from Ashtabula and Lake counties.

HABITAT: Mesic and coniferous forest, especially on acidic substrates; in Ohio apparently confined to the hemlock-white pine-northern hardwoods association.

HAZARDS: Higher temperature and lower humidity resulting from opening of the forest canopy.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed good due to its rhizomatous habit.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering or fruiting material is needed for positive identification.

COMMENTS: Mountain aster is conspicuous when in bloom and unlikely to be overlooked or misidentified. This distinctive species apparently is confined to a limited area of northeast Ohio. This part of the state has been well-botanized in recent years and only a single population of this aster has been discovered. Mountain aster grows in disturbed woods on the summit of a detached knob of Little Mountain. This is the general vicinity where Beardslee collected the species in 1871 (see State Range). However, at this site mountain aster grows with Appalachian species, such as *Rhododendron maximum*, that are known to have been introduced from Pennsylvania. The aster might have been introduced inadvertently with the cultivated shrubs, or it may be native on the knob. It is not possible to determine with absolute certainty whether or not the aster is indigenous to this particular site, but the majority of the botanists visiting the site felt it should be treated as an introduced population.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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