

GENTIANA ALBA Muhlenberg
Yellowish Gentian

FAMILY: Gentianaceae

SYNONYMS: *Gentiana flavida* Gray.

HABIT: Erect, unbranched stout herbaceous perennial, 5-10 dm.; flowering mid August-early October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Gentiana alba* is one of two white-flowered gentians in Ohio. *G. alba* can be distinguished from *G. villosa* by leaf color and shape. The leaves of *G. alba* are light yellowish above and widest near the base, whereas those of *G. villosa* are dark green above and widest above the middle. The seeds of *G. alba* are winged, while those of *G. villosa* are wingless.

TOTAL RANGE: Irregularly from s. Ontario to PA and NC, w. to MN, e. NE, e. KS, and n. AR.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams and Athens counties. Pre-1980 records are from Hamilton, Lucas, and Pike counties.

HABITAT: Mesic prairies, savannas, grassy meadows and damp woods.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed good. Pringle (1965) describes this as the most robust of all the gentians and that it does well in cultivation.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Color of the leaves should be noted. Flowering material is needed for accurate identification.

When making a permanent collection, a flower should be cut longitudinally and pressed in such a way that the shape and width of the calyx lobes, corolla lobes and corolla plaits are visible.

Gentian flowers are susceptible to insect infestation. Care should be taken to rid the plant of insect larvae by applying a topical poison to the flower.

COMMENTS: Pringle (1967) feels that the eastern populations of this species are relicts of the eastern extension of prairie vegetation during a post-Wisconsin xerothermic period.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Andreas, B.K. and T.S. Cooperrider. 1981. The Gentianaceae and Menyanthaceae of Ohio. *Castanea* 46: 102-108.

Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York. 910 pp.

Pringle, J.S. 1965. The white gentian of the prairies. Mich. Bot. 4: 43-47.

Pringle, J.S. 1967. Taxonomy of *Gentiana*, section *Pneumonanthe*, in eastern North America. Brittonia 19: 1-32.



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