

GENTIANA PUBERULENTA Pringle
Prairie Gentian

FAMILY: Gentianaceae

SYNONYM: *Gentiana puberula* Michaux

HABIT: Erect, herbaceous perennial, 1-5 dm.; flowering August-October; fruiting October, November.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Gentiana puberulenta* is a conspicuous and distinctive species. Like the fringed gentians, its corolla is fully open at maturity. Its fringeless corolla lobes visibly exceed the corolla plaits. The outer sides of the corolla lobes are suffused with greenish purple.

TOTAL RANGE: w. NY to Man. and ND, s. to WV, KY, n. AR, and KS; LA.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams, Lucas, and Wood counties. Pre-1980 records occur from Erie, Montgomery, and Seneca counties.

HABITAT: Primarily mesic and xeric calcareous areas; including prairies, barrens, sandy ridges, and dry upland woods.

HAZARDS: Unknown; possibly overshadowing by woody species as a result of succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, possibly poor. Steyermark (1963) states that this species does well in undisturbed and unburnt prairies, that it is difficult to raise from seed and that it can be transplanted only if the roots are not undisturbed.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: 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 flowers of insect larvae by applying a topical poison to the flowers. Over-collecting should be avoided.

COMMENTS: According to Pringle (1967), the eastern populations of *G. puberulenta* are relicts of the eastern extension of prairie vegetation during the post-Wisconsin xerothermic period. This plant should be sought throughout its range where suitable habitats occur. It is highly visible when in flower.

Until recently, *G. puberulenta* has been known as *G. puberula* Michaux, but Pringle (1966) found that Michaux's type is really *G. saponaria* (Wood and Weaver, 1982)

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