

HUDSONIA TOMENTOSA Nutt.  
Beach Heather

FAMILY: Cistaceae

SYNONYMS: *Hudsonia ericoides* L. ssp. *tomentosa* (Nutt.) Nickerson & J. Skog;  
*Hudsonia tomentosa* Nutt. var. *intermedia* Peck

HABIT: Prostrate or bushy tomentose shrub or subshrub, 1-2 dm.; flowering May-July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This species is very distinctive and is unlikely to be confused with any other native Ohio plant.

TOTAL RANGE: Coastal from e. Que. to NC, inland across Ont. to Alta., along the shores of the Great Lakes, and to nw. IN, cent. IL, OH, ND, MN, and WV.

STATE RANGE: There is a 1980 collection from Lucas County and a 1929 collection from Williams County. Both specimens may be from adventive populations.

HABITAT: Dry, well-drained sandy soil on beaches, dunes, and other sunny openings. It often colonizes shifting sand dunes.

HAZARDS: In a beach habitat, mechanical disturbances by off-the-road vehicles; overshadowing by woody species. According to Skog and Nickerson (1972) and Morse (1979), this plant is highly sensitive to trampling.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Bailey (1949) states that it is a difficult species to grow and is short-lived, but may be propagated by seeds and cuttings.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: This plant is not likely to be misidentified. Careful observation of associated plant species should be noted in order to distinguish between adventive and native populations.

COMMENTS: The inclusion of this species in the native Ohio flora is debatable. The population most likely to have been indigenous was that in Williams County. This area has been searched in vain for *Hudsonia* in recent years. The question of the status of this species in Ohio may never be resolved.

Hall (1957) feels that continental *Hudsonia* may be the hybrid between *H. tomentosa* and *H. ericoides*. The putative hybrid is treated as *H. tomentosa* var. *intermedia* Peck. Nickerson and Skog (1972) reduce *H. tomentosa* to a subspecies of *H. ericoides*. However, Morse (1979) treats *H. tomentosa* as a full species.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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Skog, J.T. and N.H. Nickerson. 1972. Variation and speciation in the genus *Hudsonia*. *Ann. Mo. Bot. Gar.* 59: 454-464.

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