

LATHYRUS JAPONICUS Willd.
Inland Beach-pea

FAMILY: Fabaceae

SYNONYMS: *Lathyrus maritimus* (L.) Bigel. var. *glaber* (Ser.) Eames; *Lathyrus maritimus* (L.) Bigel. var. *pellitus* (Fern.) Gleason; *Lathyrus japonicus* Willd. var. *glaber* (Ser.) Fern.; *Lathyrus japonicus* Willd. var. *parviflorus* Fassett; *Lathyrus japonicus* Willd. var. *pellitus* Fern.

HABIT: Perennial herb to 1 m.; flowering June-September; fruiting July- September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Lathyrus japonicus* is very similar to some other species of this genus and also superficially resembles some species of the genus *Vicia*. It is distinguished by technical flower and fruit characters. Most other similar peas do not occur in the same habitat as *L. maritimus*.

TOTAL RANGE: Circumboreal. In N.A., s. on the Atlantic Coast to NJ, on the shores of Lake Champlain, Oneida Lake, NY, and the Great Lakes.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Ashtabula and Lake counties. There are pre-1980 records from Cuyahoga and Erie counties.

HABITAT: In Ohio, the sandy beaches of Lake Erie.

HAZARDS: Any alteration of the beach habitat; casual picking of the attractive flowers.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed poor due to the limited amount of available habitat. However, it seems to revegetate well following disturbance.

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

COMMENTS: The state range of this species probably is accurately known. It is a conspicuous member of the beach community and is not likely to be misidentified. The real extent and number of plants in Ohio populations of beach-pea vary strikingly.

Great Lakes plants also have been separated into three varieties based upon pubescence and flower size (see Synonyms). More research is required to establish the true taxonomic relationships of this complex genus.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Fernald, M.L. 1932. *Lathyrus japonicus* versus *L. maritimus*. *Rhodora* 34: 177-187.



Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Created: 1/1984 James F. Burns