

MINUARTIA MICHAUXII (Fern.) Farw.
Rock Sandwort

FAMILY: Caryophyllaceae

SYNONYMS: *Arenaria stricta* Michx.; *Arenaria stricta* Michx. var. *texana* Robins.
Minuartia michauxii (Fern.) Farw. var. *michauxii* *Minuartia michauxii* (Fern.) Farw.
var. *texana* (Robins.) Mattf.

HABIT: Densely tufted perennial herb to 2 dm.; flowering May, June; fruiting June, July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Very distinctive in its tufted growth habit and rigid leaves with the margins inrolled. Non-flowering plants resemble tufts of pincushion-moss (*Leucobryum* spp.), but can be distinguished by the presence of a midrib.

TOTAL RANGE: NH and Que. to w. Ont., s. to SC, KY, AR, and TX.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1980 specimens from 6 counties: Adams, Erie, Lucas, Miami, Ottawa, and Pike. There are pre-1980 records from 4 other counties: Clark, Cuyahoga, Franklin and Highland.

HABITAT: In full sun in well-drained, calcareous situations; often on nearly vertical rock exposures; quarries, prairies, rocky slopes.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession; trampling; rockclimbing; soil compaction.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably poor; it is not tolerant of soil disturbance.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect complete, mature specimens; avoid overcollecting.

COMMENTS: This species seems to be very local in the state due to the lack of suitable undisturbed habitat. Many of the Ohio populations consist of few individuals and occupy a very limited area. At a classic station for this species in Adams County, the species survives in nearly inaccessible crevices at the cliff edge, but has disappeared from other, heavily used sites. Though diminutive in stature, flowering plants are fairly obvious and not likely to be missed by botanical surveys. Thus, the state range may be accurately known.

Controversy surrounds the proper genus into which this species should be placed (see Synonyms). It is here retained in *Arenaria* pending more research into this problem. The var. *texana* is sometimes recognized, but most authors now consider this taxon a growth form of extreme environments. Plants from southwest Ohio usually have been listed as this variety. However, the Ohio material intergrades too freely to support this concept. It seems best not to recognize these plants at any rank.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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.

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McNeill, J. 1962. Taxonomic studies in the Alsinoidea: I. Generic and infraspecific groups. Notes Roy. Bot. Gard. Edinburgh 24: 79-155.

McNeill, J. 1980. The delimitation of *Arenaria* (Caryophyllaceae) and related genera in North America, with 11 new combinations in *Minuartia*. Rhodora 82: 499-502.



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