

PENSTEMON PALLIDUS Small
Downy White Beard-tongue

FAMILY: Scrophulariaceae

HABIT: Herbaceous rhizomatous perennial, 3-8 dm.; flowering May, June; fruiting June, July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Most Ohio specimens of *Penstemon* are superficially similar, but this species is most similar to *P. canescens*. Distinctions between these two species are sometimes very vague. *P. pallidus* generally has narrower, firmer, more pubescent leaves than *P. canescens*. In addition, *P. pallidus* generally has a white corolla with purple lines inside. *P. canescens* generally has a pink to purple corolla that is larger than that of *P. pallidus*.

TOTAL RANGE: ME to MN, s. to VA and AR.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Athens, Fulton, Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Montgomery, Vinton, and Washington counties.

HABITAT: Fields, roadsides, and open woods.

HAZARDS: Overgrowth by woody species through succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown, but probably good due to its rhizomatous habit and tolerance of disturbance.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect mature, flowering specimens. Note whether the corolla is open or closed, and press some flowers spread open to reveal floral characters.

COMMENTS: Not all specimens of this extremely variable genus can be identified with certainty. Flower color, a diagnostic character traditionally used in keys, is extremely variable and unreliable, and may be affected by available sunlight. Hybridization between *Penstemon* species may cause some of the variation.

There are very likely more populations of this plant in Ohio. It is easily misidentified. It should be sought throughout the state.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Cooperrider, T.S. 1995. The Dicotyledoneae of Ohio. Part 2. Linaceae through Campanulaceae. Ohio State Univ. Press, Columbus, OH. 656 pp.

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McCready, G.A. and T.S. Cooperrider. 1978. The Scrophulariaceae subfamily Scrophularioideae of Ohio. *Castanea* 43: 76-86.

Pennell, F.W. 1935. The Scrophulariaceae of eastern temperate North America. Monograph No. 1. Acad. of Nat. Sci., Phil. xiv and 650 p.



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