

RHODODENDRON NUDIFLORUM (L.) Torr. Var. NUDIFLORUM
Pinxter-flower

FAMILY: Ericaceae

SYNONYM: *Rhododendron periclymenoides* (Michx.) Shinnery

HABIT: Deciduous shrub to 3 m.; flowering late April-June; fruiting August-October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This species is easily confused with the very similar var. *roseum*. The var. *nudiflorum* generally has less pubescent leaves, with non-glandular, lighter colored, less fragrant flowers than var. *roseum*. These and other characters often overlap to such a degree as to make distinctions between these two taxa difficult or impossible.

TOTAL RANGE: VT and MA to cent. NY, s. to SC and TN; s. IL.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There are post-1980 collections from Ashtabula, Lawrence, and Scioto counties. There are pre-1980 records from Athens, Columbiana, Geauga, Hocking, Jackson, Pike, Trumbull, and Vinton counties.

HABITAT: A variety of areas on acidic soils in full sun to moderate shade, including oak woods, woods borders, shrub borders of bogs.

HAZARDS: Collection for horticultural uses. Although not as highly prized for this purpose as var. *roseum*, it is still a valuable plant.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Probably excellent. It grows well in recently opened areas.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material is needed for identification. Note the color and odor of the flowers, as these diagnostic characters are destroyed by pressing. Spread a flower open to reveal the pistil, also with diagnostic characters. Make an effort to determine if the population is of native origin.

COMMENTS: Both this variety and var. *roseum* are often found in the same population, and the full range of variability creates difficulties in identification.

In addition to the taxonomic problems of these two taxa, their nomenclatural status has been confused for quite some time. Shinnery (1962) and Roane (1975) discuss the opposing views in this debate. As yet no firm consensus has been reached on their correct names.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Bowers, C.G. 1960. Rhododendrons and azaleas: Their origins, cultivation, and development. Ed. 2. The MacMillan Co., N.Y. 525 p.

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.

Mohlenbrock, R.H. and J.W. Richardson. 1963. Notes on the genus *Rhododendron*.
Castanea 28: 62-65.

Roane, M.K. 1975. The valid names *Rhododendron nudiflorum* (L.) Torr. and *R. roseum*
(Loisel.) Rehd. Taxon 24: 540.

Shinners, L.H. 1962. *Rhododendron nudiflorum* and *R. roseum* (Ericaceae): Illegitimate
names. Castanea 27: 94-95.

Skinner, H.T. 1955. In search of native azaleas. J. Morris Arbor. 6: 3-10, 15-22.

Wilson, E. and A. Rehder. 1921. A monograph of azaleas. Publ. Arnold Arbor. 9: 1-210.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

Created: 1/1984 David Spooner