

***Spiraea virginiana* Britt.**  
Appalachian spiraea



ODNR Natural Heritage Program

**Family:** Rosaceae

**Synonyms:** None

**Description:** Clonal shrub reaching a height of 3 m tall; leaves oblanceolate and somewhat glaucous underneath; white flowers in corymbs.

**Flowering:** late June to early July

**Fruiting:** July to early September

**Similar Species:** *Spiraea alba* may be confused with *S. virginiana* but flower clusters of *S. alba* are more elongate and leaves are more sharply

toothed. The non-native *S. japonica* may also be confused with *S. virginiana* but the flowers are pink, leaves are more lanceolate, and has hairs on the branchlets. From a distance, *Spiraea virginiana* may be confused with *Hydrangea aborescens*.



**Total Range: USA:** AL, GA, KY, NC, OH, PA, TN, VA, WV.

**Ohio Range:** Scioto County

**Ohio Status:** [www.ohiodnr.com/dnap](http://www.ohiodnr.com/dnap)

**Habitats:** Gravelbars and creek banks of mid-size streams.

**Threats:** Changes in stream hydrology and invasive species. Ogle (1992) lists *Polygonum cuspidatum*, *Spiraea japonica* and *Rosa multiflora* as threats.

**Conservation Potential:** This species has very specific habitat requirements and poor reproduction. One site is now protected by the state. Recent field surveys have found one new population on Scioto Brush Creek; however surveys of other streams have not produced any new populations (Gardner & Moser 2007; Stine 1993).

**Inventory Guidelines:** *Spiraea virginiana* is a federally listed species and requires a federal collecting permit to collect. The species can be determined from detailed photographs of the plant, flowers, & habitat.

**Comments:** *Spiraea virginiana* is endemic to the southern Appalachians (Ogle 1991a). Stine first discovered this species in Ohio in 1991 on Scioto Brush Creek and it is presently known from a small stretch of this creek. This species is currently known from seven states and historically from Alabama and Pennsylvania.

Appalachian spiraea typically grows along scoured sections of high gradient streams requiring periodic flooding. In Ohio, *Spiraea virginiana* occurs in this type of habitat.

Sexual reproduction is very rare and suggests poor genetic variability (Anders & Murrell 2001, Ogle 1991b). Reproduction is primarily from vegetative propagules. Range-wide, fewer than 30 different genotypes are currently known (Anders and Murrell 2001; NatureServe 2006). Ohio populations are small with 5 or less clones. This is similar to populations in other parts of its range.

Some associates found at Ohio sites include *Acer saccharum*, *Aconitum uncinatum*, *Alnus serrulata*, *Apocynum cannabinum*, *Aruncus dioicus*, *Betula nigra*, *Bohemeria cylindrica*, *Campsis radicans*, *Carex frankii*, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Chasmanthium latifolium*, *Cornus amomum*, *Crataegus* sp., *Eupatorium fistulosum*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, *Glyceria striata*, *Helenium autumnale*, *Hydrangea arborescens*, *Hypericum prolificum*, *Iris cristata*, *Lindera benzoin*, *Lysimachia ciliata*, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, *Phlox paniculata*, *Pilea pumila*, *Platanus occidentalis*, *Salix caroliniana*, *Saururus cernuus*, *Senna hedecarpa*, *Thalictrum pubescens*, *Toxicodendron radicans*, *Ulmus americana*, and *Vitis riparia* (Gardner & Moser 2007; Stine 1993).

Future surveys could be done on Scioto Brush Creek and similar size streams in southeastern Ohio. Its Ohio range may be close to being known.

### **Selected References:**

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