GENTIANA ALBA Muhlenberg
Yellowish Gentian

FAMILY: Gentianaceae

SYNONYMS: Gentiana flavida Gray.

HABIT: Erect, unbranched stout herbaceous perennial, 5-10 dm.; flowering mid August-early October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Gentiana alba is one of two white-flowered gentians in Ohio. G. alba can be distinguished from G. villosa by leaf color and shape. The leaves of G. alba are light yellowish above and widest near the base, whereas those of G. villosa are dark green above and widest above the middle. The seeds of G. alba are winged, while those of G. villosa are wingless.

TOTAL RANGE: Irregularly from s. Ontario to PA and NC, w. to MN, e. NE, e. KS, and n. AR.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams and Athens counties. Pre-1980 records are from Hamilton, Lucas, and Pike counties.

HABITAT: Mesic prairies, savannas, grassy meadows and damp woods.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed good. Pringle (1965) describes this as the most robust of all the gentians and that it does well in cultivation.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Color of the leaves should be noted. Flowering material is needed for accurate identification.

When making a permanent collection, a flower should be cut longitudinally and pressed in such a way that the shape and width of the calyx lobes, corolla lobes and corolla plaits are visible.

Gentian flowers are susceptible to insect infestation. Care should be taken to rid the plant of insect larvae by applying a topical poison to the flower.

COMMENTS: Pringle (1967) feels that the eastern populations of this species are relicts of the eastern extension of prairie vegetation during a post-Wisconsin xerothermic period.

SELECTED REFERENCES:


Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

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