

TROLLIUS LAXUS Salisb. ssp. LAXUS  
Spreading Globe-flower

FAMILY: Ranunculaceae

SYNONYM: *Trollius laxus* Salisb. var. *laxus*

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial, 1-5 dm., flowering late April, May; fruiting May-July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: In flower, similar to a large *Ranunculus*, such as *R. septentrionalis*, or *Caltha palustris*, both of which occur in similar habitats. The leaves are very different on *Caltha*, however. *Trollius* has follicles and *Ranunculus* has achenes.

TOTAL RANGE: CT, NY, NJ, PA, and OH. Rare and local throughout this range with many populations believed extirpated. The ssp. *albiflorus* (Gray) Rydb. occurs widely through the western U.S. and adjacent Canada.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): There are post-1980 records from Ashtabula and Mahoning counties. There are pre-1980 records from Fairfield, Stark, and Wayne counties, although the Wayne County record may have been from cultivated plants. Henry and Buker (1958) list a Columbiana County record.

HABITAT: A variety of moist, sunny meadows, bogs, and openings. One Ohio population is found in an opening in a pin oak swamp with a gentle flow of water running through it, the other occurs in a shrub swamp dominated by alders.

HAZARDS: Drainage of the habitat; overshadowing by woody species through succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering or fruiting material is needed for identification. Avoid overcollecting.

COMMENTS: This species has apparently been extirpated from a large portion of its range. In Ohio, however, it may be undercollected due to its early blooming date, occurrence in wet habitats, and superficial similarity to other species of the Ranunculaceae.

Most authors consider the eastern and western elements of *Trollius laxus* as a single species. Some authors treat these elements as varieties. Love et al. (1971) raise the varieties to subspecies level. This treatment, adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1980), is also followed here. More research may clarify this confused taxonomic situation.

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