

SFI Biodiversity Species Fact Sheet

Torreys Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum torreyi*)

Pennsylvania Plant Species; State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G2 (imperiled)

Identification

Pycnanthemum torreyi most closely resembles *P. verticillatum*, from which it differs by its leaves and bracts being glabrous on the upper surface, (those of *P. verticillatum* evidently hairy above). *P. torreyi* also has longer (1 to 1.5 mm) and sharper calyx teeth (those of *P. verticillatum* 0.5 to 1 mm long and triangular). *P. virginianum* has stem pubescence confined to the stem angles, and *P. tenuifolium* has a glabrous stem, in contrast to the uniformly finely pubescent stems of *Pycnanthemum torreyi*.



Biology-Natural History

This species is named for John Torrey, the famous New York botanist who wrote the first Flora of New York in 1843. *Pycnanthemum torreyi* is perennial and flowers from late June to October. Populations occur as small, dense colonies which are vulnerable to destruction from minor habitat perturbations or stochastic events



Distribution & Habitat

Dry upland forests, dry rocky woodlands over mafic, ultramafic, or calcareous rocks, edges of sandstone glades, dry-mesic barrens, thickets, upland meadows, and powerline rights-of-way. In Pennsylvania specifically this species likes dry upland woods, streambanks, and open thickets. The plant has been located at elevations ranging from 820-1060 feet.

Conservation Concerns

Primary threats include succession and invasion of habitat by exotic, weedy plants, such as Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*). Spraying of herbicides by railroad, highway, or utility crews for right-of-way maintenance threatens populations near these corridors. Other threats to populations include habitat destruction due to general development, road construction, timber harvest, soil disturbance, refuse dumping, trampling by humans, horses, and tractors, and recreational pressures.

Management Practices

In states where populations are small, at least two occurrences should be protected. Where right-of-ways (railroad, highway, utility, etc.) exist, maintenance crews should use cutting methods instead of spraying herbicides. In grassland habitat a continual mowing regime is needed in order to keep natural plant succession in check. The use of fire as a management tool may be required for sites which have been maintained in the past as opened areas (either by fire or other means). Control of exotic and weedy plant species (such as *Lonicera japonica*) is needed to eliminate the threat of crowding out *Pycnanthemum torreyi* within its habitat. If anyone observes this species they should call the jurisdictional agency, DCNR Bureau of Forestry at 717-787-3444.