



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Threatened and Endangered Species

Northern Monkshood

Aconitum noveboracense



States in which northern monkshood is found.



The northern monkshood is a threatened species. Threatened species are animals and plants that are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. Endangered species are animals and plants that are in danger of becoming extinct. Identifying, protecting, and restoring endangered and threatened species is the primary objective of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species program.

What is Northern Monkshood?

- **Appearance** - Northern monkshood is noted for its very distinctive, blue hood-shaped flowers. The flowers are about 1 inch in length, and a single stem may have many flowers. Stems range from about 1 to 4 feet in length. The leaves are broad with coarse, toothed lobes.
- **Range** - Northern monkshood has only been found in Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, and New York.
- **Habitat** - Northern monkshood is typically found on shaded to partially shaded cliffs, algal talus slopes, or on cool, streamside sites. These areas have cool soil conditions, cold air drainage, or cold groundwater flowage. On algal talus slopes, these conditions are caused by the outflow of cool air and water from ice contained in underground fissures. These fissures are connected to sinkholes and are a conduit for the air flows.
- **Reproduction** - Northern monkshood is a perennial and reproduces from both seed and small tubers. The flowers bloom between June and September and are pollinated when bumblebees pry open the blossom to collect nectar and pollen.

Why is the Northern Monkshood Threatened?

- **Habitat Loss or Degradation** - Threats to northern monkshood include contamination and filling of sinkholes, grazing and trampling by livestock, human foot traffic, logging, maintenance of highways and powerlines, misapplication of pesticides, quarrying, and road building.
- **Collection** - Some populations have been adversely affected by scientific collection.

What Is Being Done to Prevent Extinction of the Northern Monkshood?

- **Listing** - Northern monkshood was added to the U.S. List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants in 1978.
- **Recovery Plan** - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared a recovery plan that describes actions needed to help the plant survive.
- **Research** - Many northern monkshood populations are being monitored to determine long-term population trends. Genetic studies are being conducted so population differences can be better understood.
- **Habitat Protection** - A variety of government and private conservation agencies are all working to preserve the northern monkshood and its habitat. Voluntary protection agreements have also been made with some private landowners.

What Can I Do to Help Prevent the Extinction of Species?

- **Learn** - Learn more about northern monkshood and other endangered and threatened species. Understand how the destruction of habitat leads to loss of endangered and threatened species and our nation's plant and animal diversity.
- **Join** - Join a local or national conservation group.
- **Volunteer** - Volunteer at your local zoo, wildlife refuge or nature center. Work with their staffs or other community members to maintain and restore local habitat.
- **Protect** - Protect water quality by minimizing use of lawn chemicals (i.e., fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides), recycling used car oil, and properly disposing of paint and other toxic household products.
- **Grow Natives** - Grow native plants in your lawn and garden but obtain the plants from local nurseries, do not dig up native plants from natural areas. Avoid using invasive, non-native plants in landscaping, such as purple loosestrife, shrub honeysuckles, buckthorn, and dame's rocket.