

## **TREES AND PLANTS**

### **SWAMP PINK**

#### **ABOUT**

The Swamp pink (*Helonias bullata*) is part of the lily family, although there is little resemblance. It has smooth, evergreen, lance-shaped leaves approximately 3 to 10 inches long that lie fairly flat on the ground. The stocky, hollow stem grows from 1 to 3 ft tall and has sparse modified leaves along its length. In April or early May a cluster of pink flowers bloom at the top of the stem, and this is dotted with pale blue anthers (stamens that hold the pollen). The Swamp pink lives only in shady forested wetland areas, since the species cannot survive in open sun.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The long-term existence of Swamp pink populations is dependent on the availability of high-quality, undisturbed habitat. It is no longer found in many areas along the mid-Atlantic states because extensive development has destroyed or degraded the plant's habitat. The change in water quality and supply to wetlands caused by disturbances in upland areas are not always readily apparent and can eliminate the sensitive Swamp pink from a forested wetland without directly destroying the wetland itself. Once found inhabiting wetland areas from New York to Georgia, Swamp pink is now only found along the coastal plain from New Jersey to Virginia and in isolated areas in the southern Appalachian Mountains.

#### **TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

The Swamp pink is a member of which plant family?

- a) Hollyhock
- b) Tulip
- c) Rose
- d) Lily

Answer is D.

