



TREES AND PLANTS

SANDPLAIN GERARDIA

ABOUT

The Sandplain Gerardia (*Agalinis acuta*) is also known as the Sandplain Agalinis or Sandplain False Foxglove. It is an annual from the Figwort family. A slender plant, it grows between 4 – 8 inches tall with few branches. The leaves are long and thin and are arranged opposite each other on the stem. Flowers are tubular and only bloom for a day. The Sandplain Gerardia is found in the sandplain grasslands of the northeastern US, where it produces delicate, bright pink or purple flowers in late summer. It likes dry, low-nutrient soil and seems to depend on natural disturbances – like fire – to flourish. The plant relies on insects like bumblebees for pollination, and its tiny, light brown, textured seeds disperse near the parent plant from oval fruits in the fall.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Sandplain Gerardia was discovered in Maryland in 1950 and is found in five states – Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island. Less than 15 populations of this endangered wildflower exist, with the largest groupings found in Massachusetts and New York. It is thought that there are around 10,000 plants total, although being an annual, this number varies from year to year. Among the main threats to the plant's survival are: loss of habitat on coastal sandplains to residential development; suppression of fire, grazing, and other necessary disturbances that keep competing plants from taking over the Sandplain Gerardia's habitat; drought; a decline in pollinators; and humans and off-road vehicles crushing them. US Fish and Wildlife officially listed the Sandplain Gerardia as endangered in 1988, authorizing a recovery plan with specific goals relating to research on the species' biology and habitat, carefully monitoring existing populations, and trying to protect its habitat to stop possible extinction.

For more detailed information visit: www.dnr.state.md.us or www.centerforplantconservation.org.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

What year was the Sandplain Gerardia listed as endangered?

- a) 1948
- b) 1950
- c) 1988
- d) 2005

Answer is C

