

# Plant Conservation for Gardeners

from the Center for Plant Conservation



## How Gardeners Can Help Save America's Vanishing Flora

Long before America became a nation of gardens, it was called a Garden of Eden, blessed with lush, unique native flora. Now, that natural bounty is about to slip through our fingers – but America's gardeners can help save it.

At the Center for Plant Conservation, we're working to conserve, preserve and restore our most vulnerable native plants. We need the collaboration of green thumbs around the country to make sure that all of our gardens – both planned and natural – can thrive.

### What can gardeners do to help preserve America's vanishing flora?

Horticultural enthusiasts can help imperiled native flora in many ways! The 32 botanical gardens and arboreta that participate in the CPC network often need volunteers to help store seed, monitor plants, locate hidden populations, transplant propagules, or care for seedlings in the greenhouse. Or, you could help in the office by recording data. See the list of CPC institutions on our website for more information.

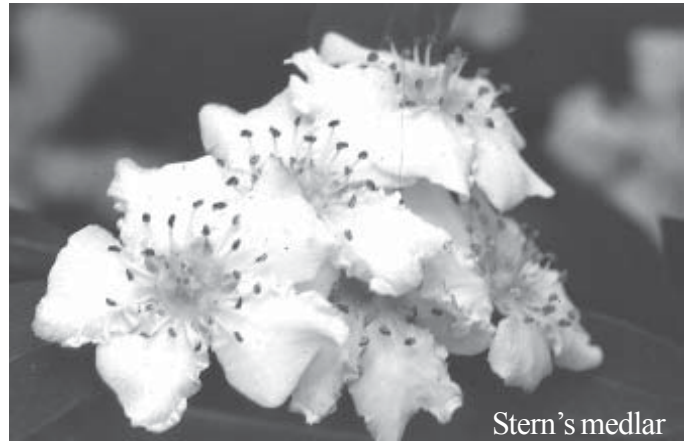
By becoming a friend of CPC, or by sponsoring a plant in our national collection, you can speed recovery efforts for our nation's most vulnerable plants and wildflowers. Visit our website, [www.centerforplantconservation.org](http://www.centerforplantconservation.org), or call us at (314) 577-9540 for more information.

Gardeners can also help by becoming more aware and spreading the word about the importance of saving our vanishing flora. Did you know that 5 percent of all native U.S. plants are federally listed as endangered, threatened, or a candidate for listing? Yet many people, including our leaders, know very little about the importance of native flora, and too little is allocated to fund native plant conservation. Our decision-makers need to know that you care about preserving the many benefits brought by native plants. Use your voice at the local or national level to share awareness of the plight of vulnerable native plants.

In your own garden, you can help by avoiding the introduction of invasive exotic species, which take over habitat and crowd out vulnerable natives. Your local botanical garden or arboretum may have information, or go online to the National Park Service website's alien plant information page at <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/index.htm>.

### Can CPC send me seeds of imperiled plants?

Sorry, but no. Botanists throughout the CPC network of participating institutions collect and store seeds to hold in protective custody for our National Collection of Endangered Plants. Maintaining a complete, genetically representative sampling of seeds is vital to preserve restoration options for the future. Propagated plants are used by conservationists to restore populations of these valuable



Stern's medlar

Photo by Casey Galvin

natural resources to the wild, and to recreate lost habitat. These seeds are needed for conservation work. Plus, distribution of endangered plants is regulated by law, although some nurseries may have permits to sell specific plants.

### Is it okay to collect rare wildflowers?

Please do not collect seeds, roots, or other plant parts from imperiled, rare, or locally rare wildflowers or plants. It is illegal to disturb federally endangered plants on public land, and casual collecting can dramatically harm plants that are already at risk! In the case of the endangered Smooth-purple coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*), for example, over-collection by enthusiasts who confused this bright wildflower for medicinal *Echinacea* has been a major cause of decline.

Instead, seek out plants that are lawfully propagated by a responsible nursery – or choose a close relative that is not imperiled for your home garden.

### Can I help save endangered plants by growing them in my garden?

In most cases, unfortunately, no. The goal of plant conservation is to maintain the genetic resources of rare and at-risk plants in order to preserve options for restoration to the wild.

Genetic diversity is usually much greater in plant populations growing in the wild. Plants grown in gardens will experience different kinds of genetic shifts than those grown under wild conditions, because they won't experience the same interactions with soil, animals, weather, and other natural phenomena. Germinating and cultivating imperiled plants to maintain wild levels of diversity is carried out by trained conservation botanists under strict controls that cannot be duplicated in a backyard garden.

Garden versions of imperiled species might even alter the genetics of the wild population if they're close enough to be cross-pollinated!

On the other hand, a garden of native plants not facing risk of extinction can be a beautiful way to celebrate local natural heritage. See reverse for resources.

# The National Collection of Endangered Plants

Some wild strains of native plants are closely related to the horticultural varieties that grace backyards and award-winning gardens. And some of these wildflowers are dwindling to dangerous scarcity. You can help ensure long-term care and security of these species by helping to sponsor a plant in CPC's National Collection of Endangered Plants.

The national collection is a bank of seeds, cuttings and other plant material from more than 600 of the country's most imperiled native plants. Botanists at CPC participating institutions gather and catalogue these plant materials

## Plants Awaiting Sponsorship

### Bellflower Family (*Campanulaceae*)

Pear Clermontia (*Clermontia pyrularia*)  
 Haha (*Cyanea grimesiana* ssp. *obatae*)  
 Lanceolate-leaved rollandia (*Cyanea lanceolata* ssp. *lanceolata*)  
 Cuyamaca Lake Downingia (*Downingia concolor* var. *brevior*)  
 Boykin's lobelia (*Lobelia boykinii*) (*Delissea rhytidosperra*)

### Iris Family (*Iridaceae*)

White irisette (*Sisyrinchium dichotomum*)  
 Pale blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium sarmentosum*)

### Mallow Family (*Malvaceae*)

hau Kuahiwi (*Hibiscadelphus hualalaiensis*)  
 Clay's Hibiscus (*Hibiscus clayi*)  
 Neches River rose-mallow (*Hibiscus dasycalyx*)

### Heath family (*Ericaceae*)

Vine Hill manzanita (*Arctostaphylos densiflora*)  
 San Bruno manzanita (*Arctostaphylos imbricata*)  
 White-wicky (*Kalmia cuneata*)  
 Honeysuckle azalea (*Rhododendron austrinum*)

### Rose Family (*Rosaceae*)

Arizona cliff-rose (*Purshia subintegra*)  
 Harbison hawthorn (*Crataegus harbisonii*)  
 Bent avens (*Geum geniculatum*)  
 Appalachian avens (*Geum radiatum*)  
 Stern's medlar (*Mespilus canescens*)  
 Grimy ivesia (*Ivesia rhypara* var. *rhypara*)

### Sunflower family (*Asteraceae*)

White topped aster (*Aster curtus*)

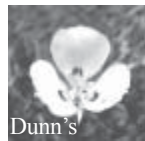
according to strict standards developed by CPC's Science Advisory Council. The materials are then stored and maintained in protective custody at the participating institution, preserving our options for restoration. Generous donors help support the maintenance and research of plants in our collection.

Is there a relative of one of your garden favorites that needs sponsorship? Check our partial list of unsponsored plants below, or browse the complete national collection online at [www.centerforplantconservation.org](http://www.centerforplantconservation.org).



Schweinitz's sunflower

Photo by Rob Gardner



Dunn's mariposa lily

Photo by Mark Elvin



Pale blue-eyed grass

Photo by Linda McMahan

Way-side aster (*Aster vialis*)

Arizona rabbit-bush (*Chrysothamnus molestus*)  
 Smooth-purple coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*)  
 Basalt daisy (*Erigeron basalticus*)  
 Willamette Valley daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*)  
 Maguire daisy (*Erigeron maguirei* var. *maguirei*)  
 Desert sunflower (*Helianthus niveus* ssp. *Tephrodes*)  
 Pecos sunflower (*Helianthus paradoxus*)  
 Schweinitz's sunflower (*Helianthus schweinitzii*)  
 Houston camphor daisy (*Rayjacksonia aurea*)

### Orchid Family (*Orchidaceae*)

Southern Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium kentuckiense*)  
 Navasota ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes parksii*)  
 Madrean ladies's tresses (*Spiranthes delitescens*)

### Lily Family (*Liliaceae*)

St. Croix agave (*Agave eggersiana*)  
 Dunn's mariposa Lily (*Calochortus dunnii*)  
 Purple amole (*Chlorogalum purpureum* var. *purpureum*)  
 Harper's beauty (*Harperocallis flava*)  
 Large-flower rushlily (*Hastingsia bracteosa*)  
 Lemon lily (*Lilium parryi*)

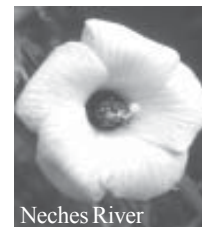
# Resources ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

♦ You can find native plant nurseries and seed suppliers, native plant organizations, and a database of native plants for every state, all at **The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's** website: [www.wildflower.org/?nd=npin](http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=npin).

♦ Your local **botanical garden or arboretum** may have classes about native plants or a native plant garden on display. They may also be able to give you tips on nurseries in your area that stock native seeds and plants.

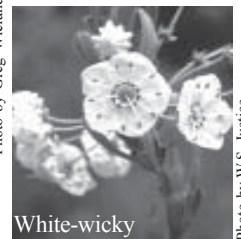
♦ Your **state native plant society or wildflower society** may hold regular talks, meetings or outings and may distribute a newsletter. It's a good way to meet other native plant enthusiasts, many of whom will be willing to share their expertise

♦ Your state's **conservation department** may also be able to help you locate native plant resources.



Neches River rose-mallow

Photo by Greg Wieland



White-wicky

Photo by W.S. Justice

Pitkin marsh lily (*Lilium pardalinum* ssp. *pitkinense*)  
 San Diego bear-grass (*Nolina interrata*)  
 Texas Trillium (*Trillium texanum*)  
 Munz mariposa lily (*Calochortus palmeri* var. *munzii*)  
 Camatta Canyon amole (*Chlorogalum purpureum* var. *reductum*)

### Phlox Family (*Polemoniaceae*)

Santa Ana woolly-star (*Eriastrum densifolium* ssp. *sanctorum*)  
 Spreading navaretia (*Navarretia fossalis*)  
 Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium occidentale* var. *lacustre*)  
 Washington polemonium (*Polemonium pectinatum*)  
 Holy ghost ipomopsis (*Ipomopsis sancti-spiritus*)

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