



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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Sandplain Flax

Linum intercursum Bickn.

State Status: **Special Concern**

Federal Status: **None**

Description: Sandplain Flax is a slender perennial herb, 10-20" (25-51 cm) tall. The stem is stiff and usually unbranched below the inflorescence. Its leaves are narrowly elliptic, less than one inch (12-20 mm) long and less than 1/4" (2-4 mm) are borne on slender, stiff, ascending branches. Flowering occurs from July to August. The seed capsules are round with a short but distinct conical cap.

Similar Species in Massachusetts: Two species of flax resemble Sandplain Flax in Massachusetts. Wild Flax (*Linum virginianum*) has branches which are more widely spread than those of *L. intercursum* and a similar seed capsule but without the pointed cap. Small Stiff Yellow Flax (*L. medium*) has narrower leaves and a similar seed capsule, but also without the pointed cap.

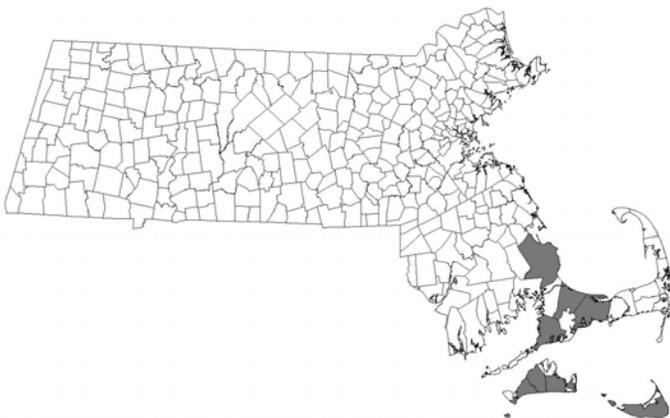
Range: Sandplain Flax ranges from southeastern Massachusetts along the coastal plain to North Carolina, then inland to northern Georgia, northern Alabama, and eastern Tennessee. It also occurs in northwestern Indiana.



Holmgren, Noel H. 1998. *The Illustrated Companion to Gleason and Cronquist's Manual*. The New York Botanical Garden.

Habitat in Massachusetts: Sandplain Flax inhabits dry, open, sandplain grasslands or moors, sand barrens, swaths under powerlines and mown fields, usually in small colonies. Co-occurring species include *Andropogon scoparius* (Little Bluestem), *Agrostis* spp. (ticklegresses), *Lechea* spp. (pinweeds), *Gaylussacia baccata* (Black Huckleberry), and *Helianthemum* spp. (rockroses).

Population Status: Sandplain Flax is considered a species of Special Concern in Massachusetts. Currently (1984 to present), 55 occurrences have been reported; historically, 15 other occurrences have been recorded. Reasons for its rarity include its location in Massachusetts at the northern edge of its range and the succession of many open habitats to woody vegetation.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1984-2009

Based on records in Natural Heritage Database

Updated 20 February 2009

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