Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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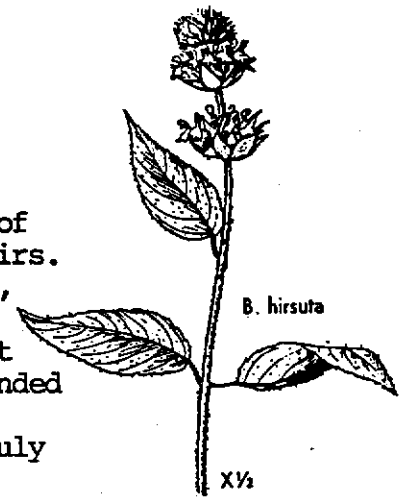
MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

HAIRY WOOD-MINT
(Blephilia hirsuta (Pursh) Benth.)



Gleason, H.A. The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern U.S. and Adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, 1952.

DESCRIPTION

Hairy Wood-mint has a branched stem growing to a height of 1½ - 3 ft (½-1m), and is covered with long, down-like hairs. The stalked, serrated leaves are 1½ - 3 in (4-8 cm) long, oval-shaped, taper to a gradual point and have a minty scent. The flowers grow in circular clusters (whorls) at intervals at the top of the stem. Each cluster is subtended by large, veiny bracts. The corollas are pale purple or whitish, with dark spots. The flowering season is mid-July to mid-August.

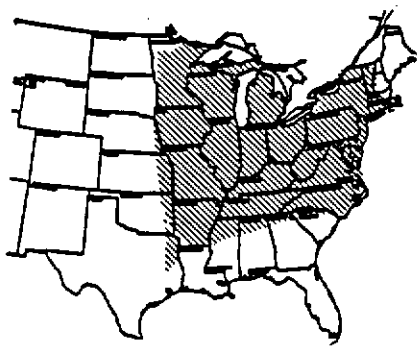
SIMILAR SPECIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

Downy Wood-mint (B. ciliata) is similar, but its leaves are sessile or on short stalks and the flowers are a deeper pink color. It typically occupies drier and more open sites than B. hirsuta. Wild Basil (Satureja vulgaris), a common alien of fields, roadsides, thickets and open woods, has deeper pink flowers and lacks the subtending veiny bracts.

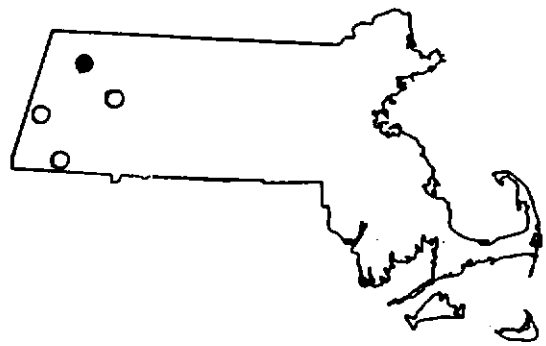
HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Hairy Wood-mint is found in thickets and in rich mesic forest communities where moderately well-drained, calcium rich soils annually undergo an almost complete turnover of litter. Associated plants include Uvularia grandiflora (Large-flowered Bellwort), Panax quinquefolius (Ginseng), Milium effusum (Millet Grass), Dicentra Cucullaria (Dutchman's Breeches), Asarum canadense (Wild Ginger), Acer saccharum (Sugar Maple), and Tilia americana (Basswood).

(continued overleaf)



Distribution of Bephilia hirsuta



● Verified since 1978
O Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

RANGE

Hairy Wood-mint is distributed from western Quebec and Vermont west to Minnesota, south to northern Georgia, Tennessee and eastern Texas.

POPULATION STATUS

This species is considered "Endangered" in Massachusetts. There are only 2 occurrences known currently (since 1978), and an additional 3 historical (before 1978) records for Hairy Wood-mint in Massachusetts. The fact that Hairy Wood-mint is near the eastern edge of its range in Massachusetts is a contributing factor to its rarity in the state; however, too little of this specie's ecology and biology is known to more fully explain its rarity.