



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

www.mass.gov/nhesp

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Green Dragon *Arisaema dracontium* (L.) Scott.

State Status: **Threatened**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Green Dragon, a member of the Arum family, stands 30-90 cm (1 to 3 feet) tall. The leaf is usually solitary, long-stalked, and up to 1 m (40 in.) tall at maturity, though typically is much shorter. There are from 7 to 13 dull green leaflets, which narrow at the base; these are produced along one side of the leaf only. The central leaflets measure 10-20 cm (4 to 8 in.) long while the outer ones become successively smaller. The large green bract that forms a hood (spathe) enclosing the inflorescence is slender, erect, convoluted, pointed, and measures 3-6 cm (1.2 to 2.4 in.) long. The spike (spadix) which has its base surrounded by the spathe tapers to a long slender point and protrudes 5-10 cm (2 to 4 in.) beyond the spathe. Flowers at the base of the spadix are greenish-yellow and measure 10-20 cm (4 to 8 in.). A population of Green Dragon may be all male or a combination of male and female (monoecious). Most young plants are male but an increase in size and age, poor soil, and low humidity may encourage the appearance of female parts and diminish the male structures proportionately. Berries are orange-red and stand atop the stem in fall after the leaf has wilted.

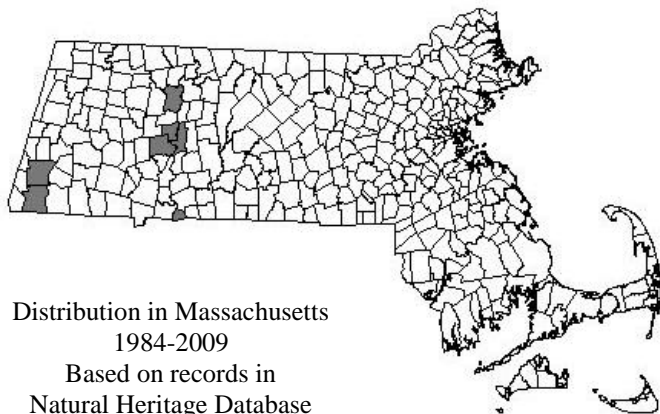


Photo by Bruce Sorrie, NHESP

SIMILAR SPECIES: Jack-in-the Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) resembles Green Dragon but has a more dominant spathe which overtops the short spadix. It has only three broad leaflets per leaf. Jack-in-the Pulpit is an uncommon member of floodplain forests. At one site in Massachusetts, hybrids between the two species have been found, the only such population known.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: Green Dragon is found in floodplain woodlands, with open to filtered light, in moist alluvial sites with annual flooding, usually restricted to the low lands along large rivers. Surrounding plant life may include Silver Maple, Butternut, Cottonwood, Green Ash, Basswood, Elm, Ostrich Fern, Wood Nettle, grasses, and sedges. Not infrequently, Green Dragon occurs at the borders of small depressions that fill with water in spring and slowly dry out.

THREATS: Within its limited habitat, Green Dragon may be out-competed by Ostrich Fern. Its rarity is most likely attributable to extensive loss of its habitat to



Distribution in Massachusetts
1984-2009

Based on records in
Natural Heritage Database

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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agricultural development. Green Dragon is considered a rare species in New Hampshire, Vermont, Delaware, North Carolina, Nebraska, Quebec, and Ontario.

RANGE: Green Dragon is found from southwest Quebec to Minnesota south to Florida and Texas.

FLOWERS PRESENT:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Updated 2015

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