



**Natural Heritage
& Endangered Species
Program**

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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Pink Pyrola
Pyrola asarifolia
Michx.

State Status: **Endangered**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Pink Pyrola is a delicate, perennial wild flower in the Wintergreen family (Pyrolaceae). Its thick, 3-6 cm (1.2 - 2.4 in.) long, evergreen leaves are shallowly heart-shaped at their bases. In addition, these rather roundish leaves are borne on long stalks arranged in a rosette near the base of the plant. Pink Pyrola's flower stalk reaches from 1.5 to 3 dm (4 to 15 in.) in height. Its pink or pale purple, nodding flowers occur in a raceme (an elongate, unbranched grouping of stalked flowers). Each of the 4 to 22 blossoms has five petals that are 5-7 mm (0.20-0.28 in.) long and ten stamens (male reproductive organs) that open by terminal pores. Flowering season extends from mid-June to late July. Pink Pyrola's fruit is a capsule (a many-seeded fruit derived from a compound pistil).

SIMILAR SPECIES: Several other species of *Pyrola* occur in Massachusetts and somewhat resemble Pink Pyrola. Round-leaved Pyrola (*P. rotundifolia*) has white petals and oblong or oblong-ovate sepals. In contrast, the sepals of Pink Pyrola are triangular. Shinleaf (*P. elliptica*) has white petals and thin, elliptic leaves. Pink Pyrola has leathery leaves. Greenish-flowered Pyrola (*P. chlorantha*) has white petals veined with green and has leaf blades that are frequently shorter than the petioles (leaf stalks). The leaf blades of Pink Pyrola are as long as or longer than the petioles. Finally, of all these species, only Pink Pyrola has flowers that are definitely pink or pale purple.

HABITAT: Pink Pyrola is found in swamps influenced by calcareous (or alkaline) groundwater seepage and in moist, limy woods. In Massachusetts, it is found only in coniferous fens (areas where cold, nutrient-poor, but calcium-rich water seeps to the surface). Among the plant species associated with Pink Pyrola in this state are White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Black Ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), Shrubby Cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) and Dwarf Raspberry (*Rubus*

pubescens). Rare Massachusetts plants that have been found with Pink Pyrola include Hemlock-parsley (*Conioselinum chinense*) and Showy Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*).



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 2: 669.

RANGE: The documented range of Pink Pyrola extends from Newfoundland to Alaska and south to New York, northern Indiana, Minnesota, New Mexico and Oregon

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS: Pink Pyrola is currently listed as Endangered in Massachusetts, where there are no current populations. Reasons for the plant's rarity in our state include the

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

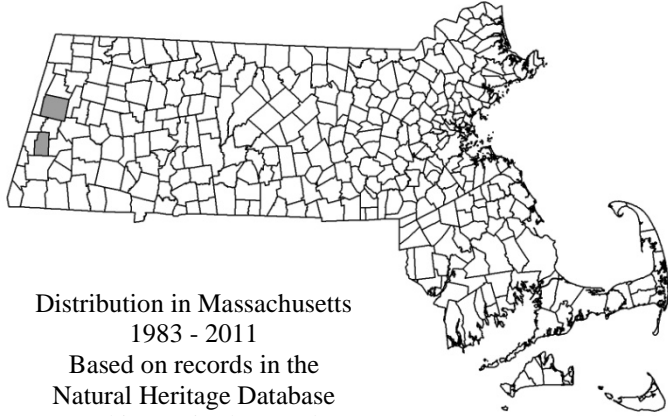
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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scarcity of alkaline habitat and the fact that Massachusetts is at the southeastern limit of its range. The species *Pyrola asarifolia* is considered rare in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Iowa, and Indiana.



Distribution in Massachusetts
1983 - 2011
Based on records in the
Natural Heritage Database
N.B.: This species has not been
reported in Massachusetts since 1983.

Updated 2019

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