

GUIDELINES FOR THE INCLUSION OF HYBRIDS

Hybridization and polyploidy represent significant evolutionary phenomena producing the diversity of flowering plants and ferns. The legal protection of hybrids by POSCIP is essential to preserving this biodiversity. Fertile hybrids may form distinct taxa eligible for inclusion under the Plants of Special Concern in Pennsylvania on their own merit. Sterile hybrids or hybrid swarms of undetermined status may be the result of unusual or unique biotic events and also may warrant preservation.

1. As the biological status of such hybrids may vary or be poorly understood, addition of such hybrids should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. The Committee further suggests that any recommendation, addition or deletion, of a putative hybrid population follow these guidelines:
 - a) Hybrids of listed species should not be included on the sole basis that one or both parents in the cross are Endangered, Rare, etc. However, as such hybrid crosses carry a portion of a diminishing gene pool, their inclusion on POSCIP should be given priority consideration.
 - b) A rare hybrid of two common species (i.e., neither parent under any current danger of extinction) may be recommended if there is strong justification for its inclusion on POSCIP. Such justification may include, but not be limited to, the uniqueness of its ecological role, its potential as a speciation event, and morphological distinctiveness.
 - c) Hybrids which occur in transient habitats and which may have little documented permanence in a particular locality should not be generally recommended for inclusion on POSCIP. Hybrids that do form stable populations present for a decade or more are more appropriate for listing.
 - d) As with any species nominated for POSCIP listing, rare hybrids and polyploids of uncertain taxonomic status or questionable hybrid origin should be listed under the TU (tentatively undetermined) category.