

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING THE STATUS OF SPECIAL CONCERN TAXA IN PENNSYLVANIA

PX – Pennsylvania Extirpated

- Definition from Pennsylvania Code – A classification of plant species believed by the Department to be extinct within this Commonwealth. The plants may or may not exist outside this Commonwealth. If plant species classified as Pennsylvania Extirpated are found to exist, the species automatically will be considered to be classified as Pennsylvania Endangered.
- PBS Guideline – Taxon not documented for 50 years or taxon otherwise known to be extirpated.

PE – Pennsylvania Endangered

- Definition from Pennsylvania Code – A classification of plant species which are in danger of extinction throughout most or all of their natural range within this Commonwealth, if critical habitat is not maintained or if the species is greatly exploited by man. This classification also includes populations of plant species that have been classified as Pennsylvania Extirpated, but which subsequently are found to exist in this Commonwealth.
- PBS Guideline – 1-5 extant sites for the taxon or less than 5,000 individuals

PT – Pennsylvania Threatened

- Definition from Pennsylvania Code – A classification of plant species which may become endangered throughout most or all of their natural range within this Commonwealth, if critical habitat is not maintained to prevent their further decline in this Commonwealth, or if the species is greatly exploited by man.
- PBS Guideline – 6-20 extant sites for the taxon or 5000 - 10,000 individuals

PR – Pennsylvania Rare

- Definition from Pennsylvania Code – A classification of plant species which are uncommon within this Commonwealth because they may be found in restricted geographic areas or in low numbers throughout this Commonwealth.
- PBS Guideline – 21-50 extant sites for the taxon or 10,000 - 100,000 individuals

TU – Tentatively Undetermined

- Definition from Pennsylvania Code – A classification of plant species which are believed to be in danger of population decline, but which cannot presently be included within another classification due to taxonomic uncertainties, limited evidence within historical records or insufficient data.
- PBS Guideline – Taxa for which the identification of specimens is questionable, the taxonomic status is uncertain, the native status is questionable, or otherwise the quality of the data concerning the taxon are such that it is unrankable in any of the other categories.

The TU category is represented in the PBS scheme by specific tentative categories using a U with a system of modifiers. The U represents a recommendation to BOF for an official status of TU (Tentatively Undetermined). U is the first letter in the species category, followed by either X, E, T, or R to indicate that the species will PROBABLY turn out to fit criteria for a status of PX, PE, PT, or PR respectively, in our best judgment at this time. Thus, UX is "undetermined status but probably extirpated in PA". UE is "undetermined status but probably endangered in PA", etc.

The UX, UE, UT, or UR should be followed by one or more of the following modifiers to indicate the issue(s) preventing assignment to a definite category:

I—Identification of specimens is questionable.

T—Taxonomic status is uncertain.

F—Fieldwork is needed to better understand the current distribution and abundance of the species.

D—Dubious: it is unclear whether the supporting specimen(s) were actually collected within the Commonwealth.

N—Native status of the species is unclear.

H—Herbarium studies are needed.

Various additional considerations have been used, in addition to the PBS guidelines listed above, to shift statuses up or down:

Factors sliding a species up include: a rare or specialized habitat such as barrens or wetland/aquatic species; habitats declining due to management practices, such as fire suppression; degree of threat; vulnerable life history, such as dependence on a single species for pollination.

Factors sliding a species down include: suspected under-collection, species securely protected in natural area.