

About MNAP
Focus Areas
Communities, Plants and Animals
Natural Communities and Ecosystems
Rare Plants
Invasive Plants
Ecological Inventory and Monitoring
Rare Animals
State and Global Rarity Ranks
Survey Forms
Maps, Data, and Technical Assistance
Ecological Reserves

## Maine Natural Areas Program

### Asarum canadense L.

#### Wild Ginger

- State Rank: S1S2
- Global Rank: G5
- State Status: Threatened

**Habitat:** Rich woods and in the vicinity of shaded calcareous ledges. [Hardwood to mixed forest (forest, upland)]

**Range:** New Brunswick and Quebec to Ontario, and Minnesota, south to North Carolina, Alabama, and Arkansas.

**Aids to Identification:** Wild ginger is a low perennial with two heart-shaped leaves (8-15 cm wide) arising on hairy petioles from a creeping rhizome with the distinct taste and smell of ginger. The single flower, purple-brown and with three long-pointed calyx lobes, grows at the base of leaves.



**Ecological characteristics:** Wild ginger spreads vegetatively and usually grows in extensive colonies. It is likely that it is extremely slow to establish itself from seed, so when eliminated from an area by digging or land development, it may be very slow to come back.

**Phenology:** Flowers in spring, in Maine usually in May.

**Family:** Aristolochiaceae

**Synonyms:** *Asarum acuminatum* (Ashe) Bickn., *Asarum canadense* var. *acuminatum* Ashe., *Asarum canadense* var. *ambiguum* (Bickn.) Farw., *Asarum reflexum* Bickn.

**Known Distribution in Maine:** This rare plant has been documented from a total of 15 town(s) in the following county(ies): Aroostook, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford, Somerset, York.

**Reason(s) for rarity:** At northern limit of range.

**Conservation considerations:** Some known populations are vulnerable to conversion of their habitat to residential or commercial use. Because the plant requires shade, heavy logging where it grows could be detrimental; the effects of light to moderate logging are unknown.



Credits







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