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Minuartia groenlandica (Retz.) Ostenf.

Mountain Sandwort

- State Rank: S3
- Global Rank: G5
- State Status: Special Concern

Habitat: Granitic ledges and gravel. [Rocky summits and outcrops (non-forested, upland); Alpine or subalpine (non-forested, upland)]

Range: Greenland and Labrador to northern New England, New York, along coast of Nova Scotia to eastern Maine.

Aids to Identification: Mountain sandwort is a low-growing perennial with dense tufts of linear opposite leaves at the base. Its slender flowering stems with cymes of 1-30 white, five-petaled flowers rise 5-10 cm above the matted foliage. *Minuartia groenlandica* differs from *M. glabra* in that it has larger flowers (petals 6-10 mm long compared to 4-6 mm long) and more densely tufted leafy basal shoots.



Ecological characteristics: Mountain sandwort most often grows on relatively dry wind-swept exposures of acidic rock or gravel. In such habitats, it may be abundant forming extensive mats where the irregularities of the rock substrate afford it a niche. While its occurrence in Greenland and Labrador and at elevations above 1200 m in Maine indicate its tolerance for climatic extremes, it is probably restricted from less severe habitats by competition from other plants.

Phenology: A perennial, flowers June - September, fruits July - October.

Family: Caryophyllaceae

Synonyms: *Arenaria groenlandica* (Retz.) Spreng.; *Porsildia groenlandica* (Retz.) A. & D. Löve; *Sabulina groenlandica* (Retz.) Small.

Known Distribution in Maine: This rare plant has been documented from a total of 28 town(s) in the following county(ies): Franklin, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Washington.

Reason(s) for rarity: At southern limit of range, habitat somewhat restricted.

Conservation considerations: Some populations could be threatened by heavy recreational (hiking) use of its mountain-top habitat, but the plant appears to cope well with moderate disturbance.



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