



Rare Plants of New Hampshire

Pink Wintergreen

Pyrola asarifolia Michx.

Wintergreen family

(Pyrolaceae, sometimes included in the Heath family, Ericaceae)

What Does It Look Like?

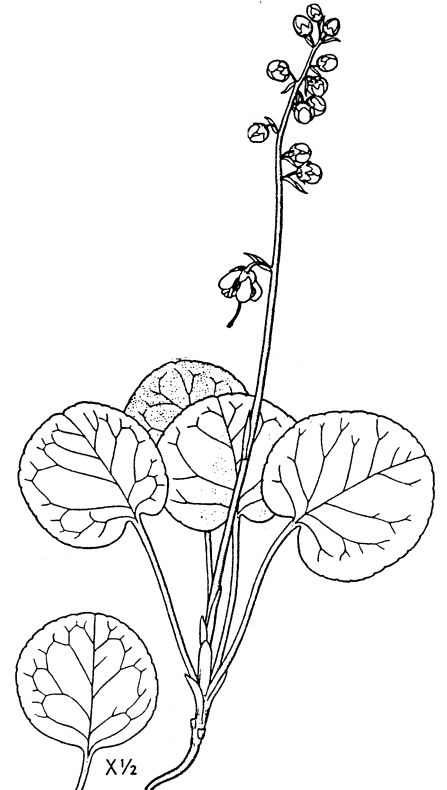
This woodland plant is a perennial herb from a short, creeping stem; flower stalks are 10-35 cm (4-14 inches) high, above a cluster of basal leaves.

Leaves: All of the round to heart-shaped leaves are clustered at the base of the plant, 3-6 cm (1-2.5 inches) long, slightly toothed, and have long stalks.

Flower: Pink to pale-purple; 5 regular parts; 4-22 flowers along the stalk, each 1-2 cm (0.5-0.8 inches) wide, nodding, with a prominent downward-pointing style. Sepals are triangular, pointed, and overlapping at the base; bracts along the flower stalk are 2-4 mm (0.1 inch) wide. It flowers from late June-late July.

Fruit: A spherical capsule, opening from base. The fruiting stalk often persist through the winter.

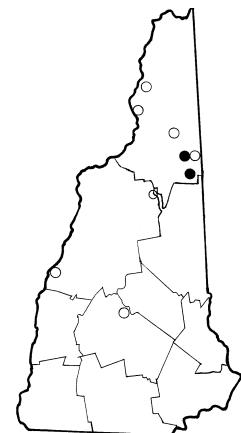
Similar species: The pink to purple flower distinguishes this from other species of *Pyrola*. In fruit, the sepals separate it from other similar species. They are distinctly longer than broad, triangular and slightly overlapping at the base.



Where Is It Found?

Habitat: Across its range, pink wintergreen grows primarily in calcareous (calcium-rich) rich woods and thickets, and also in alluvial areas within terrace forests. In New Hampshire, it may be found in rich and semi-rich mesic forests, particularly those on alluvial areas of river terraces and high floodplains.

Associated species: Plants documented at the most recently recorded site were sugar and red maple (*Acer saccharum* and *A. rubrum*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), hazelnut (*Corylus* sp.), Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*), shinleaf (*Pyrola elliptica*),



Pink Wintergreen in New Hampshire

○ Historic Locations

● Verified since 1980



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bellwort (*Uvularia sessilifolia*), starflower (*Trientalis borealis*), ricegrass (*Oryzopsis asperifolia*), wild oatgrass (*Danthonia* sp.), short husk grass (*Brachyelytrum erectum*), whorled aster (*Aster acuminatus*), rosy twisted-stalk (*Streptopus roseus*). Little other data are available on its associates in New Hampshire.

Distribution: Newfoundland west to Alaska; south across the northern states to Minnesota and east to Maine. Also in Colorado and New Mexico.

What Is Its Status?

Conservation

status: Populations of pink wintergreen are more secure farther north, but it is critically imperiled in New Hampshire where it is at the southern edge of its range. Because of its extreme rarity here (nine occurrences are recorded for the state, but only two of these have been seen since 1980) it is state listed as endangered.

Management: As a plant adapted to forest ecosystems, pink wintergreen may not respond well to significant canopy removals. Canopy removals generally increase light, temperature, and nutrient availability, and decrease moisture levels, conditions which generally favor more competitive species. If harvesting is necessary, single tree selection is likely to have less impact than clear cutting.

What Should You Do If You Find This Plant?

Please report sightings of this or other rare species to the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory. Documentation should include: (1) location of the sighting on USGS topographic map or road map, with written directions for relocating the plant; (2) a photo of the plant; and (3) descriptive information including how many plants there are, whether any plants are flowering or fruiting, and comments about the surrounding vegetation. Information may be sent to NHHI/DRED, PO Box 1856, Concord, NH 03302-1856. If you have any questions, please call the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory Program at (603) 271-3623.

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