



Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

www.mass.gov/nhesp

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Michaux's Sandwort *Minuartia michauxii* (Fenzl) Farw.

State Status: **Threatened**
Federal Status: **None**

DESCRIPTION: Michaux's Sandwort (*Minuartia michauxii*) is a perennial herb of the pink family (Caryophyllaceae) that inhabits calcareous or circumneutral rocky sites. It has slender, wiry stems, fascicles of needle-like leaves, and bright white flowers that bloom late May to July.

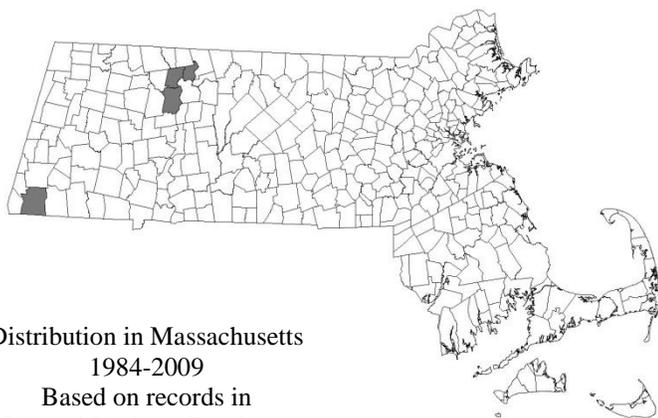
AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: Michaux's Sandwort has smooth stems that spread laterally to a length of 4 to 12 inches (10.5–30 cm) and form loose mats. The plant has fascicles of short primary and secondary needle-like leaves (0.6 to 1.3 inches; 1.5–3 cm in length), which lack stipules, and are rigid and strongly ribbed. Flowering branches are smooth, with numerous bundles of leaves and 3 to 30 widely-branched flowers. The flowers are terminal, borne on long pedicels, with five white petals and small yellow centers. The sepals are 0.2 to 0.3 inch (4–5 mm) long, broadly lance-shaped, acute, and ribbed. The petals are entire, oblong-ovate in shape, and are twice as long as the sepals. The fruit capsule is narrowly egg-shaped, solid, with entire valves. The seeds are very small (<0.1 inch; 1 mm in length), wrinkled and nearly black in color.



Gleason, H.A. 1952. *The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*. Published for the NY Botanical Garden by Hafner Press. New York.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Michaux's Sandwort is the only species of this genus in Massachusetts. Ledge-chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*) is another plant which may be found in rich, rocky habitat and which superficially resembles Michaux's Sandwort in that it can have fascicles of firm, elongate leaves; however, it has obviously notched petals.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS: In Massachusetts, Michaux's Sandwort occurs in the western part of the state on thin, dry, rocky or gravelly soils, often on limestone, traprock, or sandstone ledges with significant sun exposure. Associated species include Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Rock Spikemoss (*Selaginella rupestris*), Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Field Chickweed (*Cerastium arvense*), Tall Cinquefoil (*Potentilla arguta*), Poverty-grass (*Danthonia spicata*), and Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*).



Distribution in Massachusetts
1984-2009
Based on records in
Natural Heritage Database

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

1 Rabbit Hill Rd., Westborough, MA; tel: 508-389-6300; fax: 508-389-7890; www.mass.gov/dfw

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THREATS: Michaux's Sandwort requires sun exposure; therefore, habitat succession to dense woody vegetation, caused by the exclusion of natural or anthropogenic disturbance, often casts too much shade. Invasive exotic plant species may over-shade or out-compete Michaux's Sandwort at some sites. Habitats along trails may be threatened by trampling damage.

RANGE: Michaux's Sandwort has a patchy distribution throughout North America, and occurs within portions of the Northeast, Northwest, and Midwest. This species is also rare in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Quebec; it is presumed extirpated from Delaware. The status of Michaux's Sandwort is under review in several states.

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS: Michaux's Sandwort is listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act as Threatened. All listed species are legally protected from killing, collection, possession, or sale, and from activities that would destroy habitat and thus directly or indirectly cause mortality or disrupt critical behaviors. Michaux's Sandwort is currently known from Berkshire and Franklin Counties, and is historically known from Hampshire County.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: As with many rare species, the exact management needs of Michaux's Sandwort are not known. Sites should be monitored for over-shading caused by habitat succession to dense shrub or tree cover, and for invasive exotic species. If trampling or erosion are threats in recreational areas, trails can be stabilized or re-routed. To avoid inadvertent harm to rare plants, all active management of rare plant populations (including invasive species removal) should be planned in consultation with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

Flowering time in Massachusetts

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

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