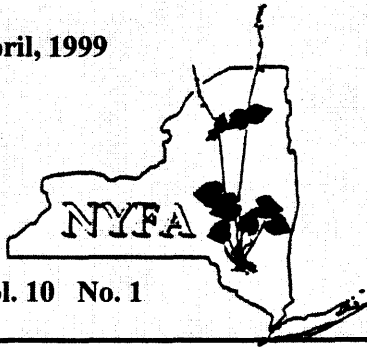


April, 1999



NYFA Newsletter

New York Flora Association
of the New York State Museum Associates

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Significant Botanical Discoveries of 1998 Compiled from Information Received at the New York Natural Heritage Program. by Steve Young, Botanist, NYNHP

One SH species (not documented in over 15 years) and two SX species (believed extirpated from the state) were discovered in the field last year. That keeps the record going for finding at least one SH species in each of the last nine years, a very impressive accomplishment. There was also a new discovery that confirmed the existence of a species that was only reported for the state, as well as an interesting range extension. There is a great deal of botanical work going on in New York and I'm sure that new discoveries will be made in the 1999 field season. Congratulations to all the successful explorers. (Listed state ranks were those assigned to the taxa at the beginning of the 1998 field season).

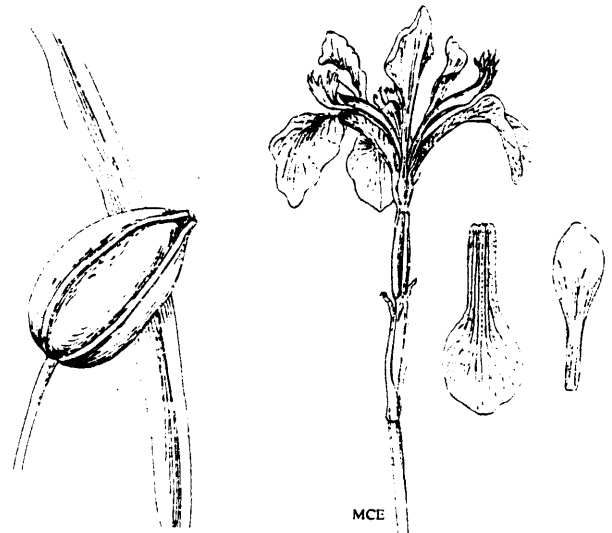
This species was last observed in New York in 1926, near Marcellus. The last specimen that had been collected in New York was in 1917 from Genesee County. Those two records were the only ones from the 20th-century prior to last year.

Rediscoveries



Chaerophyllum procumbens (L.) Crantz SPREADING CHERVIL G5 SH

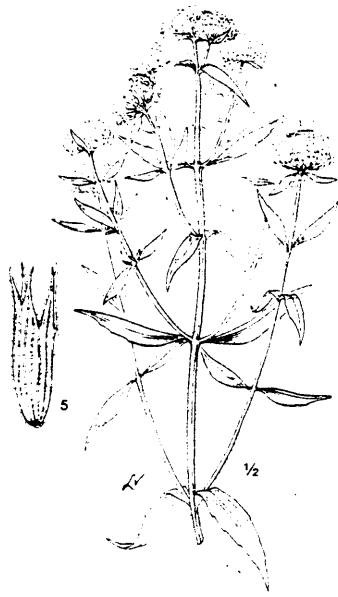
About 25 plants were found by Al Schotz in May, along the Tonawanda Creek in Genesee County.



Iris virginica L. SOUTHERN BLUE FLAG var. *schrevii* (Small) Anders. G5 (report only)

Although past reports of this taxon from New York State had never been confirmed, two populations were found in 1998 by Jim Bissel of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Both locations were on islands in the Niagara River. The inland variety of this species was previously known from eastern Ontario and the western Great Lakes States south to Oklahoma. It appeared in the list of excluded species in Mitchell & Tucker's (1997) checklist, but has now been added to the current checklist and database kept at the State Museum.

Some illustrations are from the New York Botanical Garden's (1998) publication: The Illustrated Companion to Gleason & Cronquist's Manual.



***Pycnanthemum clinopodioides* Torrey & A. Gray** MOUNTAIN-MINT **G2 SX**

Members of the Torrey Botanical Club discovered this very rare plant in Rockland County during the summer of 1998. The occurrence was documented for the Heritage Program by Troy Weldy. The last time this plant was seen in New York was in 1893 at Inwood, Manhattan Island, over 100 years ago!



***Salix herbacea* L.** DWARF WILLOW, HERB-WILLOW **G5 SX**

In the late 1980s, the only known in New York State occurrence of the species was extirpated from Algonquin Mountain. Diligent searches this past summer by Jeff Lougee, an Adirondack summit steward, turned up a new occurrence on Mount Marcy, Essex County.

Range Extention

***Plantago cordata* Lam.** HEARTLEAF PLANTAIN **G4 S3**

The first New York occurrence of this species outside the Estuarine Hudson River marshes and creek mouths was observed over 250 miles away in Erie County by Al Schotz and friends. Hundreds of plants were seen in the Tonawanda Indian Reservation last May. (see the accompanying article).

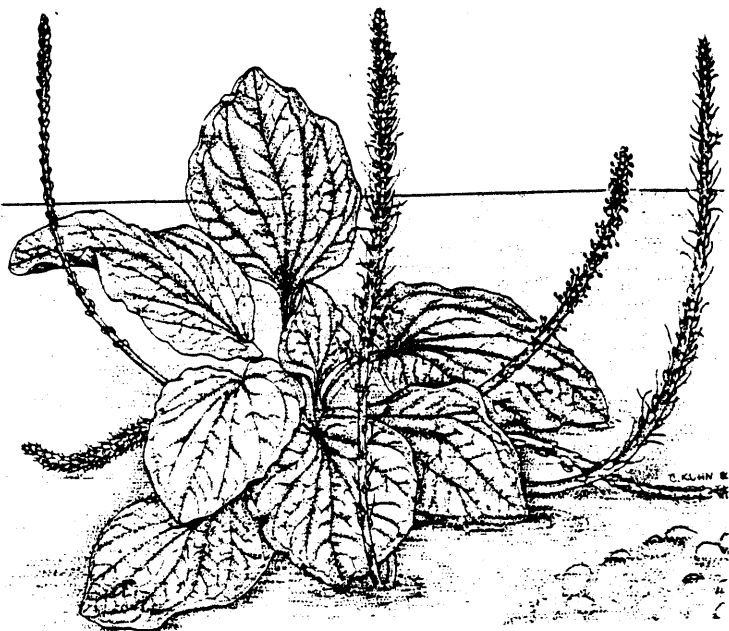
Heartleaf Plantain (*Plantago cordata*) in Western New York -

by: Alfred Schotz

During a botanical excursion through Erie and Genesee Counties in May 1998, Paul Rutledge, Kathy Ryan and I came upon a vigorous population of the heartleaf plantain (*Plantago cordata*) on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The discovery was made as a roadside observation along a small highway in the western portion of the reservation in Erie County. For the most part, the plants inhabit the margins of a clear, flowing stream underlain by a mucky substrate in association with other moisture-loving species including skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) and marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*). An exact count of the plants was not made, but a conservative estimate would be about 500 individuals. Several plants were also observed in saturated, mucky soils of the adjacent swamp forest, under a filtered canopy of American elm (*Ulmus americana*), green ash (*Fraxinus pensylvanica*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*).

Heartleaf plantain has a broad but sporadic distribution, and is considered rare throughout its range. In New York State, the species is narrowly distributed, generally preferring partially shaded conditions along streams and in riverine habitats intersecting the tidally influenced lower Hudson River Estuary. Our current report is the only vouchered occurrence of *Plantago cordata* in the western portion of the New York State, or, indeed, outside the lower Hudson River drainage system.

A historical account suggests that the species may have been previously known from the Niagara Frontier Region, but there are insufficient locality data for positive confirmation. According to card files housed at the New York State Museum, a reference was made by J. E. Whetmore, "along Crooked Creek in Alabama" on May 1, 1842. Does this citation refer to



Heartleaf Plantain (*Plantago cordata*) formerly thought to be restricted to the Hudson River Estuary in New York, now known from the Niagara Region

the Town of Alabama in Genesee County or to one of our southeastern states? Although no definitive information exists, a data search conducted through the Alabama and New York Natural Heritage Programs and a review of maps have provided some clues. As far as is known, the place name "Crooked Creek" does not appear on any historical or contemporary maps of Genesee County, New York. By contrast, near the southern limits of the plant's range in northern Alabama, that name has been applied to three streams, two of which occur in close proximity to populations currently known for the species. Thus, notwithstanding the mystery enshrouding the identity of Whetmore himself, and the absence of additional site information, it is conceivable that the reference made for *Plantago cordata* from Alabama nearly 160 years ago may be correctly attributed to our 22nd state.

Alabama Natural Heritage Program
Huntingdon College, Massey Hall
Montgomery, AL 36106

The Invasive Plant Council of New York Coming soon.

For the past five years, a group, including members of state agencies, non-profits, landscape organizations, nurseries, etc., concerned about invasive species management, has met in New York to advance collective knowledge and elevate statewide interest in weed management. More than 180 people, including students, teachers, professional biologists and managers, have attended these meetings, held all over the state. Definitions of key terms, a list of the more invasive plants for New York, and a mission statement have been developed. Many topics have been discussed at the meetings, including New York City invasive species control, research, and agency programs on invasive plant species.

We are now in the process of incorporating as a new non-profit organization dedicated to the educational needs associated with addressing the invasive plant problem in New York. We hope to be incorporated by early summer and have our federal non-profit status by the end of the year. Our next meeting will be held at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge near Buffalo on June 16. For information about the meeting or the organization, contact:

**Cris Winters at 518-273-9408 ext. 221
or email: cwinters@tnc.org.**

Books, Lists and Databases in Progress by Richard S. Mitchell

Cooperation on major botanical projects has increased dramatically in the past decade, making the prospects for new educational and technical books, data-sharing media and internet tools quite exciting. The following are efforts underway that I think will be of interest to anyone involved in field botany, ecology, taxonomy or conservation:

1) New York State Rare Plant Status List

Steve Young has announced that the rare plant list will be available on the Internet, starting this month. As you may know, a committee meets at least once a year to update information on the status of rare plants in New York State. Current status listings may be found at:

www.heritage.tnc.org/nhp/us/ny/index.html#10

2) Endangered and Threatened Plants of New York State

A cooperative venture is underway between botanists from the New York State Museum, The Nature Conservancy and the New York Natural Heritage Program. A new book is being written on the rare plants of the state, co-authored by Richard Mitchell, Robert Zaremba and Steven Young. Its purpose will be to educate the public, replacing and greatly enhancing the information in Rare Plants of New York State (Mitchell & Sheviak, 1981).

The book will include up-to-date information on agency interactions, the law, stewardship and the responsibilities and rights of individual land owners and citizens. There will be careful consideration of endangered habitats in addition to a wealth of information on the plants themselves. Current plans are to produce a richly illustrated volume (color plates and line drawings) that will serve as a text and ecological guide to the rare plants of the state.

An extensive catalog of over 600 endangered and threatened taxa will include: the geographical distribution of the species or variety in New York, a complete habitat description and full cross-referencing with Reschke's (1990) Ecological Communities of New York State.

3) A New Plant Checklist in Database Format

I am currently compiling a database, using Microsoft Access™ software, that will include much of the information found in Mitchell & Tucker (1997) Revised Checklist of New York State Plants. The project has utilized some preliminary input derived from databasing efforts by George Robinson (SUNY, Albany) and Warren Broderick (N. Y. State Archives), but it has been totally redesigned. The new database will include authors and complete citations of all taxa at all levels, so that the program may be modified to print labels as well as to make complete and accurate reports and lists with a minimum of effort. The form in which it will be available has not yet been decided, but it should be finished by the end of the year (century?whatever).

Tell us what you are doing! We love to get information of all kinds on botany and field work. It's good to share with your colleagues.

A Note from the Editor: I know, you usually get your first newsletter of the year in mid-March. My apologies for lateness, but I was first nursing my mother back to health in another state for a week and a half, then recovering myself. You'll definitely get all four issues this year -- I promise. Happy field season!
R. Mitchell

NYFA Field Trips (1999):

Trip - 1 Catskill *Carex* Workshop and Foray
Sat. and Sun. June 12-13. Early Summer NYFA trip to the Catskills. We will visit a series of Catskill sites to work primarily on *Carex* species. Bring your dissecting scopes and keys. Join us for one day or both. We will be staying at a central location. Call or write for more info.

Trip - 2 Long Island Rivers and Forests
Sat. and Sun. August 28-29. Summer NYFA trip to Long Island where we will explore one of the pine barrens rivers looking at river aquatics. A second day will feature visits to some of our unusual coastal forests. We will try to arrange housing for Sat. night.

For information, contact Bob Zaremba at 518-273-9408 ext. 226

or email: rzaremba@tnc.org.

Dues? We don't want to lose any members.

Don't forget to look above your name on your envelope to determine the last time (year) you crossed our palm with silver. All of you paid-up folks please ignore this message.