Dwarf-flowered heartleaf
Hexastylis naniflora

Dwarf-flowered heartleaf, USFWS

Status: Threatened

Description: Dwarf-flowered heartleaf is a low-growing evergreen perennial plant. It has heart-shape leaves that are four to five inches long, dark green and leathery, supported by long thin leaf stems connecting it to an underground stem. The jug-shaped flowers are usually beige to dark brown or purple and appear from mid-March to early June. The flowers are small and inconspicuous and are found near the base of the leaf stems, often buried beneath the leaf litter.

Habitat: Dwarf-flowered heartleaf grows in acidic soils along bluffs and adjacent slopes, in boggy areas next to streams and creek heads, and along the slopes of nearby hillsides and ravines.

Range: The upper piedmont region of Western North Carolina and upstate South Carolina.

Threats: The greatest threat to dwarf-flowered heartleaf is conversion of habitat to agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Habitat may also be eliminated through the construction of reservoirs, which floods habitat.

Listing: Threatened, Friday, April 14, 1989.

Critical habitat: None designated

Why should we be concerned about the loss of species? Extinction is a natural process that has been occurring since long before the appearance of humans. Normally, new species develop (through a process known as speciation) at about the same rate other species become extinct. However, because of air and water pollution, forest clearing, loss of wetlands, and other humaninduced environmental changes, extinctions are now occurring at a rate that far exceeds the speciation rate.

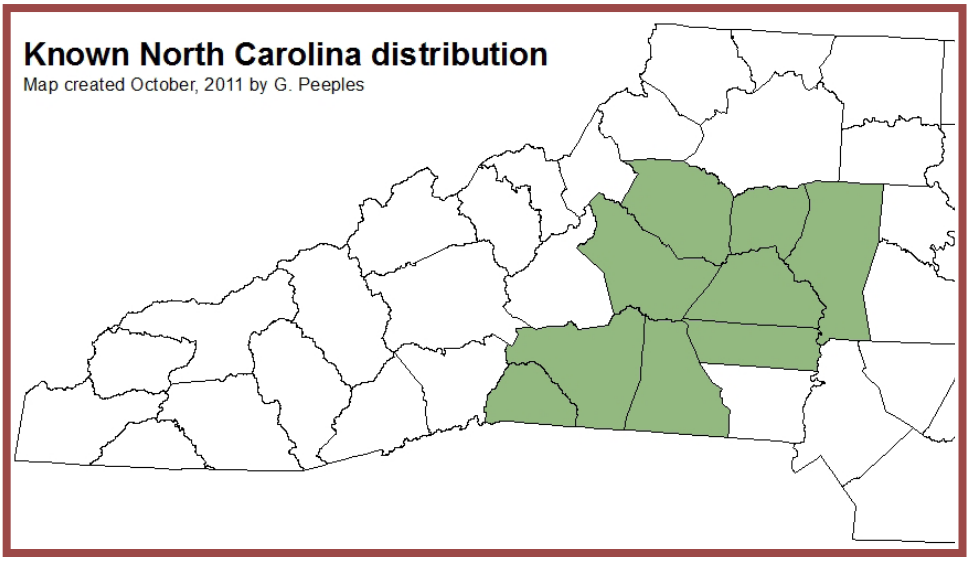
All living things are part of a complex and interconnected network. We depend on the diversity of plant and animal life for our recreation, nourishment, many of our lifesaving medicines, and the ecological functions they provide. One-quarter of all the prescriptions written in the United States today contain chemicals that were originally discovered in plants and animals. Industry and agriculture are increasingly making use of wild plants, seeking out the remaining wild strain of many common crops, such as wheat and corn, to produce new hybrids that are more resistant to disease, pests, and marginal climatic conditions. Our food crops depend on insects and other animals for pollination.

Healthy forests clean the air and provide oxygen for us to breathe. Wetlands clean water and help minimize the impacts of floods. These services are the foundation of life and depend on a diversity of plants and animals working in concert. Each time a species disappears, we lose not only those benefits we know it provided but other benefits that we have yet to realize.

What you can do to help:
Tread lightly, and stay on designated trails. On some popular mountains, the vegetation has virtually been destroyed by human trampling.

Visit arboretums, botanical gardens, and parks to learn all you can about endangered plants and the causes of their decline.

Don't collect or buy plants that have been gathered from wild populations.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Participate in the protection of our remaining wild land and the restoration of damaged ecosystems.

Be careful with the use and disposal of pesticides and other chemicals, especially near sensitive habitats.

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