

## Natural Heritage Resource Highlight: Small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*)

**Global Rarity Rank:** G2G3- Imperiled-Vulnerable      **State Rarity Rank:** S2-Imperiled

**Legal Status:** Federal listing-Threatened, State listing-Endangered



Small whorled pogonia is a perennial orchid that grows in a variety of woodland habitats in Virginia, but tends to favor mid-aged woodland habitats on gently north or northeast facing slopes often within small draws. It is quite natural for plants of this species to remain dormant in the soil for long periods of time. Direct destruction, as well as habitat loss and alteration, are principal reasons for the species' decline (Ware, 1991).

The Virginia Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommends that field surveys for this species be conducted in areas of Virginia south of Caroline County from May 25 through July 15 and in areas of Virginia from Caroline County and north from June 1 through July 20 (K. Mayne, pers. com. 1999). Please note that this species is currently classified as threatened by the USFWS and as endangered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS).

As of 2023, 70 occurrences of this state rare plant were documented in Virginia, 60 extant and 10 historic, including from the coastal zone counties of Caroline, Fairfax, Gloucester, Hanover, James City, King William, Lancaster, New Kent, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford and York, as well as the City of Petersburg and the City of Williamsburg.

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### Literature Cited

Ware, D.M.E. 1991. Small whorled pogonia. In Virginia's Endangered Species: Proceedings of a Symposium. K. Terwilliger ed. The McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company, Blacksburg, Virginia.