

Possum-haw

Viburnum nudum

Description

Possum-haw is a deciduous shrub or small tree that grows up to 12 feet (ca 4 m) tall. The leaves are oppositely-arranged, shiny above, toothed or untoothed on the margin, oblong to elliptic in shape, and typically 3 to 5 inches (8-13 cm) long. The flowers, which appear in May or June, are arranged in flat-topped clusters. The small individual flowers have white petals with 5 regular lobes. The fruits at maturity are dark blue-black and berry-like, with a single seed.

Distribution & Habitat

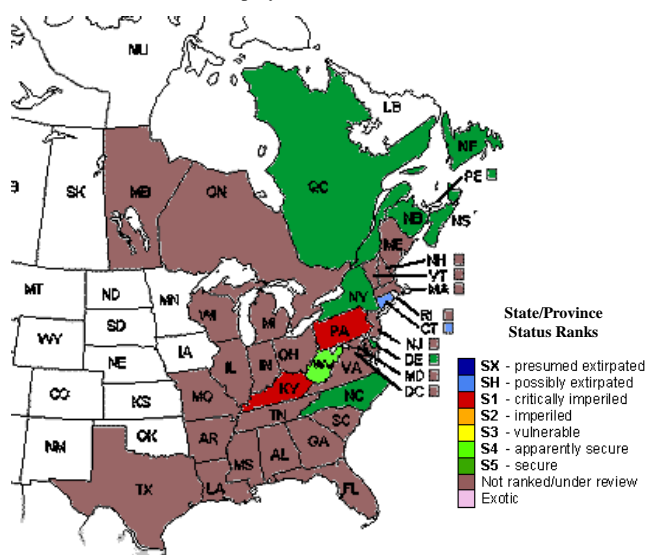
Possum-haw has a mostly coastal range from New York west and south into Texas and Florida. In Pennsylvania, it represents a southerly species and has been documented in a few southeastern counties. It grows in wetlands, particularly swamps, wet thickets, and the margins of ponds.



Photo source: PNHP

North American State/Province Conservation Status

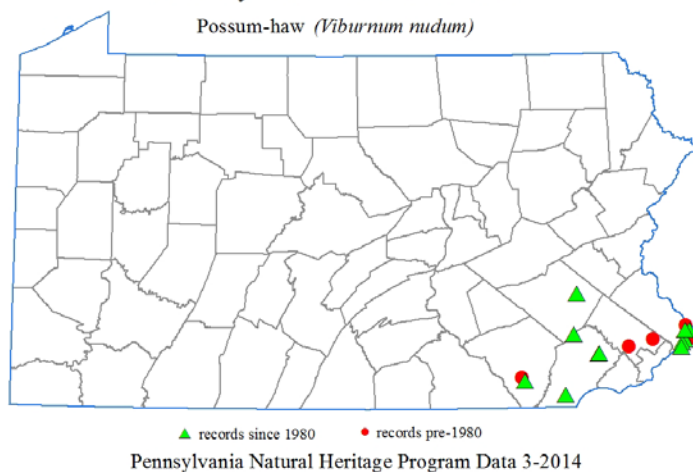
Map by NatureServe 2014



Current State Status

The PA Biological Survey considers possum-haw to be a species of special concern, based on the relatively few occurrences that have been recently documented and its wetland habitat. It has a PA legal rarity status and a PABS suggested rarity status of Endangered. Fewer than 10 populations, most of them with only a few individuals, are known from the state.

Pennsylvania Distribution



Conservation Considerations

The viability of known populations of possum-haw and its habitat would be enhanced by creating buffers around wetlands, controlling invasive species, and protecting the hydrology of the wetland and its surroundings. This species may be impacted by deer browsing in some locations.

NatureServe conservation status ranks

G5 – Globally secure; S1– Critically imperiled in Pennsylvania

References

- NatureServe. 2014. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.
- Rhoads, A.F. and T.A. Block. 2007. The Plants of Pennsylvania: An Illustrated Manual. 2nd edition. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.