

Terrestrial & Palustrine Plant Communities Of Pennsylvania

By Jean Fike

Golden saxifrage - Pennsylvania bitter-cress spring run

This community type occurs in and immediately adjacent to springs. Springs are points of concentrated groundwater flow reaching the surface. Water flow is relatively constant, and temperatures at the source are generally between 9 and 15 degrees C; pH varies between 6.0 and 8.0 at the ground surface.

Chrysosplenium americanum (golden saxifrage), *Cardamine pennsylvanica* (Pennsylvania bitter cress), and the introduced *Nasturtium officinale*^l (watercress) are by far the most characteristic species. Other species include *Saxifraga micranthidifolia*^s (lettuce saxifrage), *C. rotundifolia* (mountain watercress), *C. bulbosa* (bitter cress), and *Equisetum* spp. (horsetails). Bryophytes are an especially important element of this community type; more species information is needed.

Related types: A spring run is characterized by a concentrated flow of groundwater reaching the surface. Seeps are also groundwater-fed, but are characterized by diffuse flow.

Range: Entire state (?).

Selected references: PNDI field surveys.

[Crosswalk: Smith's "Spring Community" and "Spring Run Community," TNC's *Chrysosplenium americanum* -*Nasturtium officinale* Herbaceous Alliance.]