

Fernald's Braya

Braya fernaldii

STATUS	Not Listed		Threatened	
Endangered		Not Listed		Not Listed
				

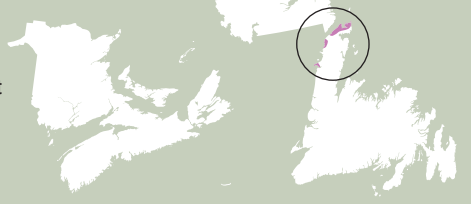


Hairy seed pods (silicles) Pinkish flowers

Species Description

Fernald's Braya is a small (1-7 cm tall) perennial member of the mustard family. Lance-shaped leaves are very small (1-4 cm long, 1-3 mm wide), somewhat fleshy, and spatula-shaped with pointed ends. Clusters of white to pinkish or purplish four-petaled flowers are held on a green to purplish, downy stalk. Petals are typically 2.4-3.8 mm long and 1-1.3 mm wide. Seed pods are hairy and hold about 10-16 tightly enclosed seeds.

Endemic to the northwestern coast of Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula; only about 3300 plants are scattered along 165 km of coast.



Habitat

Fernald's Braya requires open, sparsely-vegetated limestone barren habitat where frost-shattered gravel is present. This can be natural, undisturbed limestone barrens containing patterned ground (polygons or strips), or degraded limestone barrens such as abandoned quarries and roadways with no patterned ground. Sites are typically near the coast in wind-swept, exposed areas with low temperatures, limited snow accumulation, and moderate precipitation.



This plant is easily missed; in gravelly limestone barrens, look for tiny clumps of leaves (< 10 cm tall) and four-petaled flowers or pea-like pods.

Interesting Points

- Fernald's Braya takes at least a decade to reach maturity.
- Most populations have declined by 65% in recent years.
- Fernald's Braya, Long's Braya, and Barrens Willow are all endemic to this region and not found anywhere else on earth!



Larger plants



Smaller plants

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Similar Species

Long's Braya:

Very similar. Petals are not typically pinkish, and are 3.3-4.8 mm long and 1.4-2.5 mm wide; petals are also more flattened (see photo); seed pods usually have few or no hairs (see photo). See page III for more details.



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Low Northern Rockcress:

Similar, and also a species at risk, but not found on Great Northern Peninsula. Seeds in only one row per pod (see image); flowering stems bear leaves.



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Other Rockcress (*Arabis* & *Arabidopsis*) and Whitlow-grass (*Draba*) species only somewhat resemble the Brayas. Seed pods (siliques) for Rockcresses are moderately to very long, narrow, with seeds not tightly enclosed. Whitlow-grasses have broader, flatter, more-basally-located leaves, and flattened, often short, seed pods (siliques).

Threats to Survival

- Limestone extraction for gravel for road construction and maintenance can eliminate plants, soil, and even bedrock, essentially destroying suitable habitat.
- Use of off-highway vehicles crushes plants and rutting destroys suitable habitat.
- A non-native moth and several pathogens threaten some occurrences of Fernald's Braya.
- Climate change may alter Braya habitat.



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Limestone extraction for road construction



Harming plants and habitat is prohibited

How You Can Help

Support local stewardship activities and learn to recognize limestone barrens habitat. Encourage others to tread lightly on this sensitive habitat by avoiding the use of off-highway vehicles or trucks and reporting illegal quarrying or dumping to the Newfoundland and Labrador's Wildlife Division.

Contacts, Information & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: NL Wildlife Division (709) 637-2026

Info: www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca, www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/

Stewardship: www.limestonebarrens.ca