Vicia americana var. *americana*

American Purple Vetch

Fabaceae

Vicia americana var. *americana* by Alex Abair, 2017

***Vicia americana* var. *americana* Rare Plant Profile**

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites
Forests & Natural Lands
Office of Natural Lands Management
New Jersey Natural Heritage Program

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Life History

American Purple Vetch (*Vicia americana* var. *americana*) is an herbaceous perennial member of the Pea family (Fabaceae). *Vicia americana* var. *americana* and *V. americana* ssp. *americana* are both in use as names for American Purple Vetch but they are essentially equivalent (see Synonyms section), and *americana* is the only variety that occurs in the eastern United States.

The slender stems of American Purple Vetch can be erect but are usually trailing or climbing, dependent on surrounding vegetation for support. Reaching 30–100+ cm in length, the stems are square, usually hairless, occasionally pubescent (Britton and Brown 1913; Craighead et al. 1963; Gleason and Cronquist 1991; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Kirk and Belt 2010; LBJWC 2025; Minnesota Wildflowers 2025; Sturla 2025). Plants have a long, often branched taproot (to 100 cm deep) with fibrous roots and can spread by rhizomes (Allen and Tilley 2014).

The leaves of American Purple Vetch are alternate, entire, almost sessile, and pinnately compound with 4–8 pairs of pinnately veined leaflets. The rachises are 2–8 cm in length. Leaflets are variable, 15–35 mm x 1–14 mm, elliptical or ovate oblong, with rounded, blunt, or pointed tips. The leaflets become smaller toward the end of the leaf. At each leaf tip, there is a forked, prehensile tendril used to clasp nearby vegetation for support. At the base of the leaf there are a pair of broad, sharply pointed "toothed" stipules (Britton and Brown 1913; Broich 2025; Gleason and Cronquist 1991; LBJWC 2023; Strausbaugh and Core 1978).

Flowers are borne in loose one-sided racemes that are minutely hairy and arise from leaf axils, with three to nine blooms per cluster. The racemes are shorter than the underlying leaves. Each flower of American Purple Vetch consists of five petals; one large petal ("banner" or "standard"), two smaller "wing" petals, and two petals fused into the "keel", which covers the ovary and stamens. The entire flower is (12–)15–22 (–25) mm long. Petal color ranges from blueish to deep pinkish purple to reddish lavender, typically turning bluer with age. The flower calyx has five unequal triangular lobes, all minutely hairy and shorter than the calyx tube. American Purple Vetch blooms from May to September, although this can vary depending on location (Allen and Tilley 2014; Broich 2025; Gleason and Cronquist 1991; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Gunn 1979; Minnesota Wildflowers 2025; Strausbaugh and Core 1978; Weakley et al. 2025). In New Jersey, blooming has been recorded from late May to July, with fruiting through August (Hough 1983).

A month after flowering, American Purple Vetch produces fruits called legumes (informally known as pods) that contain two to several, up to ten+ purplish brown to olive green or black mottled seeds. Each seed is 3.5–5.0 mm in diameter, smooth, and subspherical to oblong in shape. Pods are smooth, reticulate, partially flattened 2.0–3.5 by 0.5–1.0 cm and acute at both ends (Britton and Brown 1913; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Gunn 1979; Pahl and Smreciu 1999; Strausbaugh and Core 1978).



Left: Britton and Brown 1913, courtesy USDA, NRCS 2025a. Center & Right: Alex Abair 2017.

Pollinator Dynamics

Vicia americana var. *americana* is self-incompatible (Rantala-Sykes 2018). Insect-pollinated, Gunn and Kluve (1976) posited that only "bees or similar 'stiff-haired' vectors" could break the vetch's hardened stigmatic membrane to allow pollination to occur. Documented bee pollinators from observations in selected eastern and Rocky Mountain locations included bumble bees (*Bombus appositus; B. fervidus*, *B. flavirons*; *B. impatiens*, *B. vagans*) and European Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) (Apidae); Common Little Eastern Carpenter Bee (*Ceratina dupla*) (Anthophoridae); Southern Bronze Furrow Bee (*Halictus confusus*) and European Legume Miner Bee (*Andrena wilkella*) (Halictidae) as well as mason bees (*Osmia* spp.) and leaf-cutter bees (*Megachile* spp.) (Gucker and Shaw 2022; Hilty 2020). Hobomoke Skipper butterflies (*Lon hobomok*) also visit the flowers (Hilty 2020), as do hummingbirds (Sturla 2022) and those as well as certain other insects (e.g., Syrphidae and Bombyliidae flies) may make minor contributions to pollination. American Purple Vetch is also known to be one of a number of pea family host plants for larvae of the Eastern Tailed-blue butterfly (*Cupido comyntas*) (Sturla 2022) as well as some western species of Lycaenidae butterflies (Gucker and Shaw 2022).

Seed Dispersal

After flowering, the legumes (seed pods) of *Vicia americana* var. *americana* mature, changing color from green to a tawny reddish brown. Each pod has two sutures, one on each side, that split and twist as the pods dry to release the seeds (Allen and Tilley 2014; Broich 2025; Minnesota Wildflowers 2025). Gould et al. (2013) reported that seeds can be projected over distances up to 1.5 m (5.0 ft) but Gucker and Shaw (2022) noted that most seeds end up near the parent plant. The number of seeds produced per pod is variable, from two to several or more (USDA Forest Service 1937). Vetch seeds, particularly those in xeric habitats like some American Purple Vetch populations tend to be hard coated, their impervious surfaces helping to prevent excessive moisture loss (Lassetter 1978).

Vetch species seeds are eaten by upland game birds (Ruffed Grouse [*Bonasa umbellu*s], Ring-necked Pheasant [*Phasianus colchicus*], Wild Turkey [*Meleagris gallopavo*]), songbirds such as the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), and many species of small rodents (Martin et al. 1951; Sturla 2022) and are likely animal dispersed (Gould et al. 2013). Animals can disperse seeds even farther than a seed could be propelled by dehiscence. For example, turkeys regularly travel 1000 to 3700 m (0.6–2+ mi) within their home territories, thereby moving whatever seeds might be in their digestive tract or on their feet (Gross et al. 2015). According to USDA Forest Service (1937) all above ground parts of American Purple Vetch are palatable in part due to their "delicacy and fragility" and larger mammals may inadvertently consume seeds while browsing on leaves. Seeds of Purple Crown-Vetch (*Securigera varia*) have been documented from White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginiana*) feces (Baty et al. 2015), so it likely that larger herbivores such as deer consume other *Vicia* seeds including those of American Purple Vetch while browsing and transport them some distance.

There is a wealth of information related to the cultivation of American Purple Vetch as it is often used for habitat restoration and in pasture mixes, especially in the western states (Gucker and Shaw 2022; Kirk and Belt 2010). Seed collected for future planting should be stored in a cool dry location with longevity lasting several years (Burton and Burton 2003). Deno (1993) observed that seed dry stored for more than six months at 70°F only had an 6% germination rate vs. a 55% germination rate when dry stored at 40°F. Detailed instructions for seed collection can be found in Burton and Burton (2003).

Research by Deno (1993) showed that 65% of seeds of American Purple Vetch dry stored at 70°F germinated in three months without any treatment; however, if the seed coat was pierced after three months there was 100% germination in 2–4 days. Deno found that the seed coat became impervious over that three-month period, reducing the germination rate. In contrast, according to Pahl and Smreciu (1999) untreated American Purple Vetch seeds take 14 days to germinate but with scarification the time to germination is more than halved (3–7 days) and there is no difference in germination rates with or without scarification. See Gucker and Shaw (2022) for detailed discussion of germination research.

Most *Vicia* species have impervious seed coats that require scarification or stratification to germinate. In the wild, most American Purple Vetch seeds are likely scarified by passing through the digestive tracts of the animals that consume them. Examples of horticultural scarification techniques for American Purple Vetch include soaking the seeds in warm water for 24 hours, puncturing the seed coats, or rubbing them with sandpaper prior to spring planting. Although less effective for American Purple Vetch, seed stratification can also be used to support germination. Recommended planting depths vary, depending on the source, from no more than 12 mm (.5 in) deep to 25.4 mm (1.0 inch) or more (Allen and Tilley 2014; Deno 1993; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Great Basin Seed 2025; Interlake Forage Seeds 2025; Pahl and Smreciu 1999). For habitat restoration purposes, Smreciu et al. (2003) considered *V. americana* seeds to have good germination if scarified, moderate seedling vigor, and weak growth overall. American Purple Vetch also reproduces vegetatively by rhizome spread and is easily propagated by cutting and planting rhizome pieces in spring (Interlake Forage Seeds 2025; Kirk and Belt 2010).

Habitat

American Purple Vetch is widespread, ranging from Mexico to Canada. In the east it is predominantly found north of the 23°C (74°F) thermocline and confined to the higher elevations of mountainous regions of West Virginia and Virginia (up to 1067 m [3500 ft]) (Britton and Brown 1913) with scattered populations in the piedmont of Pennsylvania and the coastal plain of New York. Gunn (1979) considered the species to be intolerant of high heat. In the west, it is usually found in cooler coastal regions or at higher elevations in mountains up to 2100–3566 m (7000–11,700 ft) (Craighead et al. 1963; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Gunn 1979).

American Purple Vetch has a heliophily rank of 7, indicating that while it can tolerate some shade, it "rather strongly prefers" more open, sunny areas (Weakley et al. 2025). Depending on population location, typical habitats include dry, shaly or rocky woodlands, forest edges and clearings, stream scoured shorelines, tall grass prairies, thickets or meadows, roadsides, railroads, fencerows, borders, or foothill canyons (Allen and Tilley 2014; Broich 2025; Clemants and Gracie 2006; Michigan Flora Online 2025; Minnesota Wildflowers 2025; Sturla 2022; Virginia Botanical Associates 2025; Werier et al. 2025). In Indiana, American Purple Vetch is found in marshes, and along the edges of lakes and moist roadsides (Deam 1940). It can do well in sandy or loamy soils of fine to medium texture, whether moist or somewhat dry, being tolerant of some drought conditions due to its long taproot. According to Allen and Tilley (2014), American Purple Vetch can tolerate mean annual precipitation amounts as low as 254 mm (10 in) up to 1270 mm (50 in). However, with prolonged drought, American Purple Vetch produces fewer flowers (Weaver et al. 1935). *Vicia americana* var. *americana* seems to prefer a neutral to slightly acidic soil pH (Great Basin Seed 2025; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Kirk and Belt 2010).

New Jersey's extant occurrences are found along the Delaware River on limestone ledges and woodland edges that overlook the river. The substrate at one riverside occurrence was characterized as river cobble and deep alluvial deposits interspersed with hard rock outcrops and seepage areas. The American Purple Vetch was growing among dense vegetation. Associated native plant species found on ledges and wooded slopes away from the river included American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), Eastern Hemlock *(Tsuga canadensis*) with Atlantic Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolios*), Tall Thimbleweed (*Anemone virginiana*) and Purple-Flowering Raspberry (*Rubus odoratus*). Upslope species included Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*), White Sweet-Clover (*Melilotus alba*), Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.), Groundnut (*Apios americana*), Spotted Trumpetweed (*Eutrochium maculatum*), and grasses. Grapes (*Vitis* spp.) and Tall Woodbeauty (*Drymocallis arguta*) were noted on another Delaware River set of ledges with American Purple Vetch. The eight historical and extirpated populations were found on dry bluffs and woodside slopes, with one occurrence found in the woods at the edge of a saltmarsh (NJNHP 2024).

Most plants in the Pea Family have associations with mycorrhizal fungi that assist the plants with nutrient and water uptake. Wang and Qiu's (2006) survey of post 1987 literature confirmed that nine related *Vicia* species did have vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae (VAM), with one (*Vicia sylvatica*) having associations with both VAM and ectomycorrhiza. While American Purple Vetch was not specifically named in that paper, an earlier study of selected vascular plants in Alberta, Canada populations by Currah and Van Dyk (1986) did find that American Purple Vetch had active VAM associations.

American Purple Vetch and other members of the Pea Family also have symbiotic relationships with nitrogen-fixing *Rhizobium* bacteria, which live in nodules on the plant roots (Burton and Burton 2003; USDA Forest Service 1937). Those bacteria can convert atmospheric nitrogen (N_2) into chemical forms (e.g., ammonia [NH_3]) that can be used by the bacteria as well as their host plants. Such nitrogen-fixing plants are often used as cover crops to replenish nutrients in agricultural lands. Although Kirk and Belt (2010) noted that in some places American Purple Vetch can become weedy or invasive, they recommended its use as a native alternative to Purple Crown-Vetch for landscape and habitat restoration.

Wetland Indicator Status

Vicia americana is a facultative upland species in all the wetland regions that fall within New Jersey, meaning that it usually occurs in nonwetlands but may occur in wetlands. In some parts of the country, it is listed as facultative, meaning that it occurs in both wetlands and nonwetlands (U. S. Army Corps of Engineers 2020).

USDA Plants Code (USDA, NRCS 2025b)

The USDA plants code for *Vicia americana* var. *americana* is VIAMA6. The USDA lists it as a subspecies rather than a variety under the code VIAMA3.

Coefficient of Conservancy (Walz et al. 2020)

CoC = 10. Criteria for a value of 9 to 10: Native with a narrow range of ecological tolerances, high fidelity to particular habitat conditions, and sensitive to anthropogenic disturbance (Faber-Langendoen 2018).

Distribution and Range

The native range of *Vicia americana* var. *americana* encompasses much of Canada, the United States, and Mexico (POWO 2025). The map in Figure 1 depicts the extent of American Purple Vetch in the United States and Canada.

The USDA PLANTS Database (2025b) shows records of *Vicia americana* in six New Jersey counties: Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Sussex, and Warren (Figure 2). It has also been reported in Cape May County (Mid-Atlantic Herbaria 2025). The data include historic observations and do not reflect the current distribution of the species.

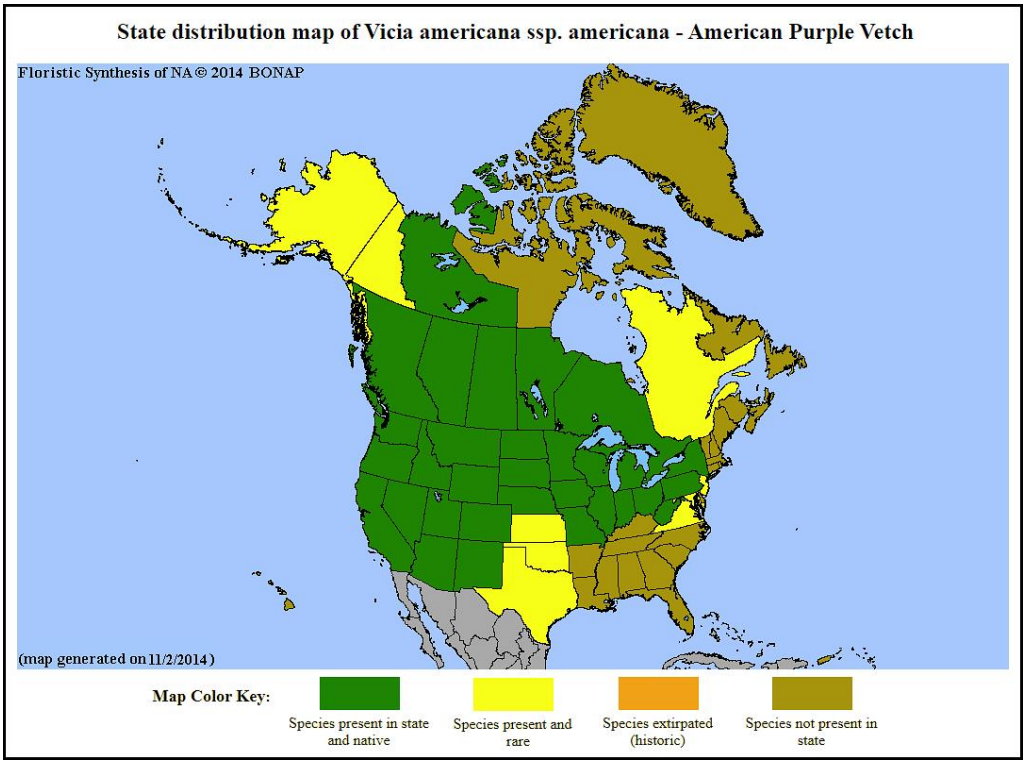

Figure 1. Distribution of V. americana var. *americana in the United States and Canada, adapted from BONAP (Kartesz 2015).*

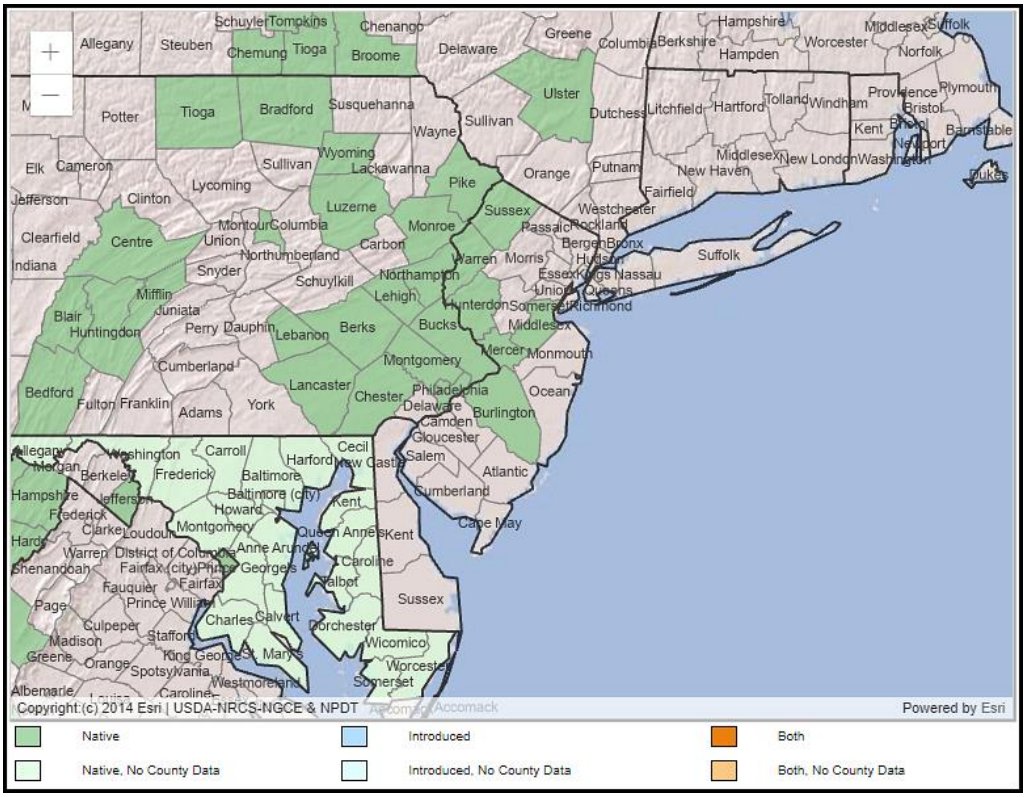

Figure 2. County records of V. americana var. *americana in New Jersey and vicinity (USDA, NRCS 2025b).*

Conservation Status

Vicia americana var. *americana* is considered globally secure. The G5T5 rank means the variety has a very low risk of extinction or collapse due to a very extensive range, abundant populations or occurrences, and little to no concern from declines or threats (NatureServe 2025). The map below (Figure 3) illustrates the conservation status of *V. americana* var. *americana* in the United States and Canada. In the majority of places where it occurs the variety is secure, apparently secure, or unranked. It is vulnerable (moderate risk of extinction) in one province, imperiled (high risk of extinction) in one state, and critically imperiled (very high risk of extinction) in three states. It is most at risk in the southeastern, eastern, and far northeastern edges of it range.

Vicia americana var. *americana* has been identified as a plant species that is likely to be a high conservation priority for the North Atlantic region, which includes four Canadian provinces and twelve U. S. states. However, it is currently deemed unrankable (RU) due to lacking or conflicting information about its regional status and trends (Frances 2017).

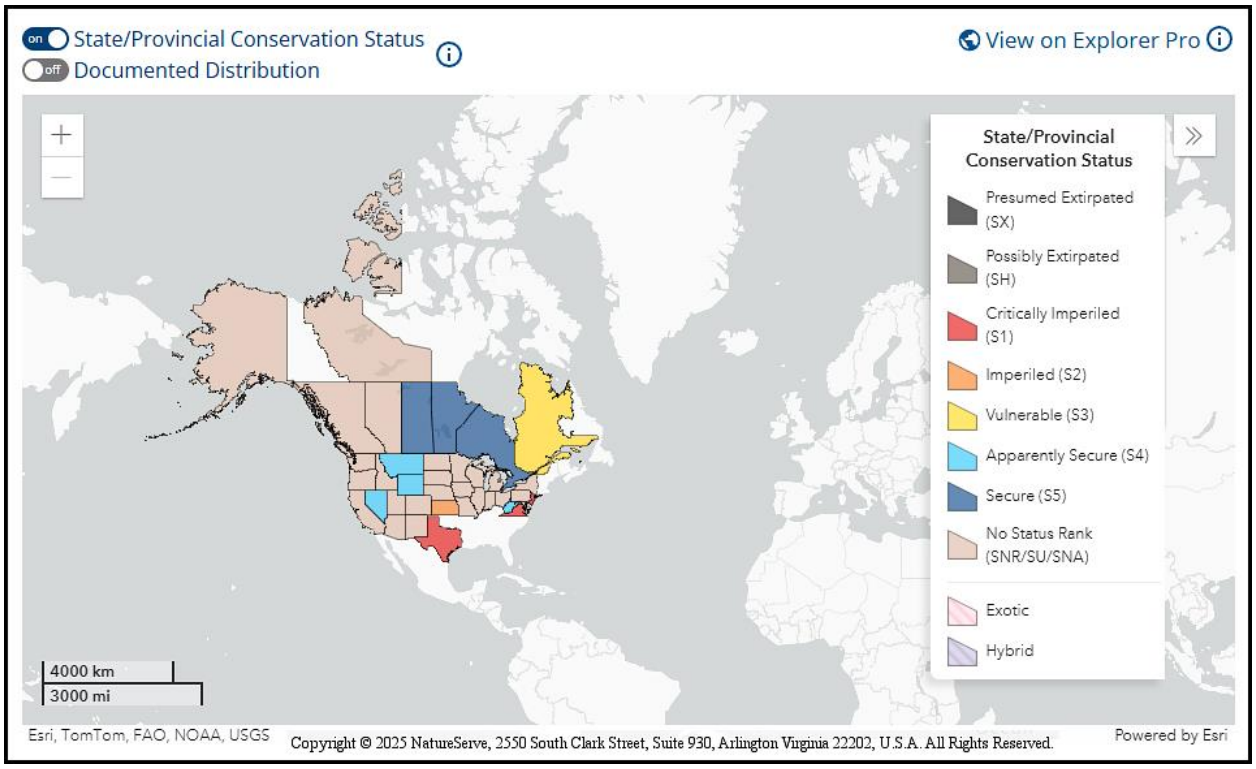

Figure 3. Conservation status of V. americana var. *americana in the United States and Canada (NatureServe 2025).*

Vicia americana var. *americana* is critically imperiled (S1) in New Jersey (NJNHP 2024). The rank signifies five or fewer occurrences in the state. A species with an S1 rank is typically either restricted to specialized habitats, geographically limited to a small area of the state, or significantly reduced in number from its previous status. American Purple Vetch is also listed as an endangered species (E) in New Jersey, meaning that without intervention it has a high likelihood of extinction in the state. Although the presence of endangered flora may restrict development in certain communities, being listed does not currently provide broad statewide

protection for plants. Additional regional status codes assigned to the vetch signify that the species is eligible for protection under the jurisdictions of the Highlands Preservation Area (HL) and the New Jersey Pinelands (LP) (NJNHP 2010a).

During the nineteenth century, New Jersey records of *Vicia americana* var. *americana* were restricted to the Delaware River Valley (Britton 1889; Taylor 1915) although it was later collected along the Raritan River and seemingly from a location in Cape May County (Mid-Atlantic Herbaria 2025). At the turn of the current century *V. americana* var. *americana* was listed as imperiled in the state but within a decade its status had been revised to critically imperiled (NJNHP 2001, 2010b). Only two of the eleven populations tracked by the Natural Heritage Program are currently listed as extant and recent visits to those sites have failed to turn up any *V. americana* var. *americana* plants (NJNHP 2024).

Threats

Due to its wide distribution and relative adaptability, there was not much discussion of threats to the species in the literature consulted. In New Jersey, however, non-native invasive species were the most mentioned threat to American Purple Vetch occurrences. Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Japanese-Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Common Wormwood (*Artemisia vulgaris*), Autumn-Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), and Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) have all been found encroaching on populations of *Vicia americana* var. *americana* (NJNHP 2024). While American Purple Vetch does rely on adjacent vegetation on which to climb, it also requires relatively open habitat. Increased canopy cover and competition with aggressive invasives will negatively affect vetch plant growth and reproduction, reducing the viability of the populations.

New Jersey's riverside populations of American Purple Vetch may also be susceptible to flooding. NJNHP (2024) noted that plants at one Delaware River American Purple Vetch occurrence may have been severely diminished or destroyed after three consecutive years of high water drowned the plants. Such high-water events are becoming more frequent as storms increase in intensity with changing climate (Hill et al. 2020). American Purple Vetch is also sensitive to trampling (Gould et al. 2013). Although the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is a favorite with canoers and campers, site visit records noted that at the time, most American Purple Vetch populations were well away from the water's edge and not exposed to trampling (NJNHP 2024).

Herbivory was not observed to be a threat to New Jersey occurrences during any past site visits (NJNHP 2024). However, many references describe American Purple Vetch (and vetches in general) as excellent forage plants for wildlife and livestock (e.g., USDA Forest Service 1937) and it is frequently included in pasture seed mixes in the western United States. Interestingly, research by Patton and Nyren (2014) found that *Vicia americana* responded favorably to cattle grazing in their North Dakota study plots possibly in part because those grazers were targeting grasses that competed with the vetch in the open pastures. Removal of those grasses allowed more sunlight and rainwater to reach the soil, which improved growing conditions for the vetch. Nonetheless, USDA Forest Service (1937) and Pahl and Smreciu (1999) cautioned that under continuous herbivore pressure, American Purple Vetch can be easily grazed out.

Apart from livestock, native browsers in western regions such as Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), and Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) forage on *Vicia americana* leaves and flowers (Coladonato 1993; Martin et al. 1951) and it is considered a preferred spring and summer forage species for North American Elk (*Cervus canadensis*) (Ogle and Brazee 2009). In New Jersey, White-tailed Deer are the primary browsers. Although no signs of herbivory were noted at New Jersey occurrences, those small, isolated, yet tender plants would be particularly vulnerable to over browsing by high densities of deer. Browsing activity that removes flowers or seeds will prevent reproduction as well as inhibit replenishment of underground food reserves that support growth in the following year (USDA Forest Service 1937).

There was no mention of disease or genetic isolation as major threats in the literature consulted other than the fact that American Purple Vetch is vulnerable to a number of *Botrytis* fungal species (Allen and Tilley 2014). However, due to the isolation of New Jersey's occurrences and relatively limited dispersal capacity of the species, it may be difficult for populations to recover after decline or for new populations to become established without human assistance.

Climate Change Vulnerability

Information from the references cited in this profile was used to evaluate the vulnerability of New Jersey's *Vicia americana* var. *americana* populations to climate change. The species was assigned a rank from NatureServe's Climate Change Vulnerability Index using the associated tool (Version 3.02) to estimate its exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity to changing climactic conditions in accordance with the guidelines described by Young et al. (2016) and historical state climactic computations by Ring et al. (2013). Based on available data American Purple Vetch was assessed as Moderately Vulnerable, meaning that climate change is expected to have a detrimental impact on its extent in New Jersey by 2050. This conclusion was reached with very high confidence; however, gaps in information regarding the species' ecological requirements and range limitations in the northeastern United States remain.

Shifting climatic conditions in New Jersey are resulting in higher temperatures, more frequent and intense precipitation events, and lengthier periods of drought and New Jersey is warming faster than any northeastern state (Hill et al. 2020). As previously mentioned, American Purple Vetch is not very heat tolerant so it is likely that future warming would make conditions even less hospitable to this species. Canada has developed current and future range maps for plant species based on climate change projections. Their American Purple Vetch range maps indicate that the species' southern range boundary will contract northward out of Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, and most of Pennsylvania by 2040, with additional range contractions northward likely in subsequent years due to warming temperatures (Natural Resources Canada 2020).

The increasing number of intense storm events has caused widespread stream flooding in certain areas of the state. Potential flooding events are likely to become a greater threat to the remaining riverside American Purple Vetch occurrences for those plants nearest the Delaware River. At the same time, while the vetch is considered somewhat drought tolerant, the longer more extreme

droughty periods that New Jersey has been experiencing recently may become a challenge to plant reproduction and survival in future years (e.g., Weaver et al. 1935).

Non-native invasive plant species were noted as a threat at three New Jersey occurrences (NJNHP 2024). As the climate continues to warm, the spread of such species into New Jersey is likely to increase. Bellard et al. (2013) considered the northeastern United States to be a probable hotspot for new invasions by non-native flora, due in part to its higher latitude and more temperate conditions. Salva and Bradley (2023) identified more than a dozen new range-shifting species that could have "major ecological impacts" on New Jersey's plant communities by 2050, while Coville et al. (2021) and O'Uhuru (2022) cautioned that some already established but relatively uncommon non-native plant species could become invasive with projected climate changes.

Management Summary and Recommendations

No plants were found at the two extant populations during the most recent (2021) site visits, although it was suggested that plants could have been missed, hidden underneath the dense cover of invasive plant species. Revisits to both occurrences are recommended to confirm population condition (i.e., whether plants or suitable habitat remain) and to determine current threats. Return visits to other occurrences that were noted as having suitable habitat despite a lack of plants (one "Failed to Find"; four "Historical") would also be worthwhile. Checking other potential locations along the river might also be of interest in case any seeds were able to move downstream with the current to become established on other silty or cobble areas.

If warranted after new site visits, removal of invasive non-native species to reduce competition and open the canopy could encourage germination of any seeds remaining in the seed bank as well as improve the vigor of American Purple Vetch plants onsite. Regular site monitoring is critical as river over wash and scour regularly bring new influxes of non-native seeds or stem pieces ashore.

Some western populations of American Purple Vetch responded favorably to varying grazing intensities and to the application of prescribed fire that reduced vegetation density and retained an open canopy (Coladonato 1993; Gucker and Shaw 2022; Patton and Nyren 2014). However, given the small population sizes and locations of New Jersey occurrences, the use of grazing or prescribed fire as management tools may not be relevant.

Past population observations noted that, although the Delaware River and shoreline in the Delaware Water Gap Natural Recreation Area is a major recreational site, there was no impact from such use because most plants were found growing well away from the shoreline (NJNHP 2024). If any new plants are located closer to the water's edge, a determination should be made regarding the need for protective measures to prevent trampling by campers or boaters. Similarly, although deer herbivory was not noted during earlier site visits, New Jersey's over abundant deer population coupled with the palatability of American Purple Vetch makes over browsing by deer a likely threat. If so, installation of fencing or other deer population management actions would be warranted.

Although there is much information about western populations of American Purple Vetch, less is known about eastern populations. Possible avenues for research include: What limits the plant in the Northeastern United States? What might have caused the decline in New Jersey? How critical is seed scarification to germination of American Purple Vetch (given conflicting research results)? How long do seeds remain viable in the seed bank in the wild? What aspects of the American Purple Vetch's life history are most vulnerable to warmer temperatures or altered precipitation patterns? In addition to animal dispersal, can the riverside vetch seeds also be dispersed by water? With all the information available about vetch cultivation, it might be possible to restore New Jersey's American Purple Vetch populations; however, given projected climate change impacts to the state, is this realistic?

Synonyms

The accepted botanical name of the species is *Vicia americana* Muhl. ex Willd. var. *americana*. Orthographic variants, synonyms, and common names are listed below (Allen and Tilley 2014; ITIS 2025; POWO 2025; USDA, NRCS 2025b).

Hooker (1831) recognized two varieties of *Vicia americana* (var. *americana* and var. *minor*). A revision by Gunn (1979) divided *V. americana* into three subspecies, two being equivalent to Hooker's varieties and the third being *V. americana* ssp. *mexicana*. The subspecies are still recognized by a number of current sources (e.g. ITIS 2025; Kartesz 2015; NatureServe 2025; USDA, NRCS 2025b). Turner (2014) redescribed *V. americana* ssp. *mexicana* as a separate species (*V. mulleriana*). Hooker's varietal rank is used by Weakley et al. (2025) and POWO (2025) as well as in New Jersey.

Botanical Synonyms	**Common Names**
Vicia americana ssp. *americana*	American Purple Vetch
Vicia americana f. *angusta* Hoover	American Vetch
Vicia americana var. *lathyroides* S. L. Welsh & N. D. Atwood	Purple Vetch
Vicia americana f. *oblonga* Hoover	American Deer Vetch
Vicia americana ssp. *oregana* (Nutt.) Abrams	Stiff-leaf Vetch
Vicia americana var. *oregana* (Nutt.) A. Nelson	
Vicia americana var. *pallida* Suksd.	
Vicia americana ssp. *truncata* (Nutt.) Á. Löve & D. Löve	
Vicia americana var. *truncata* (Nutt.) W. H. Brewer	
Vicia americana var. *villosa* (Kellogg) F. J. Herm.	
Vicia acicularis Greene	
Vicia californica Greene	
Vicia californica var. *madrensis* Jeps.	
Vicia copelandii Eastw.	
Vicia durbrowii Eastw.	
Vicia hypolasia Greene	
Vicia oregana Nutt.	
Vicia pumila A. Heller	

Vicia sparsifolia var. *truncata* (Nutt.) S. Watson
Vicia perangusta Greene
Vicia truncata Nutt.
Vicia truncata var. *villosa* Kellogg
Vicia vexillaris Greene
Vicia washingtonensis Suksd.
Lathyrus diffusus G. Don

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