

**IDENTIFICATION:** The relict trillium (*Trillium reliquum*) is a fleshy, low growing (12 inches or less) perennial herb that grows from a tuberous rhizome. It has three whorled, waxy, dark green blotchy leaves at the top of the stem. The flower has no stalk and appears to sit on top of the leaves. The flower is greenish-brown, purple, or occasionally pure yellow and is among the earliest of spring bloomers. The plant dies back to its underground rhizome in the summer and emerges in the spring.



It grows in undisturbed hardwood forests, that sometimes include mature pines, and are free of understory plants such as bushes and vines. It likes moist, well-drained soils along the banks of streams and small stream floodplains, mixed with other wildflowers and forest debris.

It was listed as an [endangered species on April 4, 1988](#). Nine populations in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina were known at the time of listing. The recovery plan for this species states it will be considered for delisting when there are 12 populations (2 in Alabama, 7 in Georgia, and 3 in South Carolina) that are self-sustaining and occur on sufficiently large tracts to ensure their perpetuation with a minimal amount of active management. The most recent U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service review of this species indicated there was one population in Alabama that met the recovery requirements.

The most significant threat to unprotected relict trillium populations is the loss or alteration of their habitat resulting from residential development. Fires, whether caused by arson, accident, or for timber management, threaten all populations.

**FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS:** Trillium is adversely affected by fire and grows best in the shade. Harvests that remove shade or dry out sites, and the use of fire are likely to adversely impact relict trilliums.

**DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY:** This plant is known to occur only in Bullock, Henry and Lee counties. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service believes it may also occur in Barbour, Macon, Pike and Russell counties.

Photo Credit: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Digital Library, <http://digitalmedia.fws.gov/>, accessed on 10-25-16



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