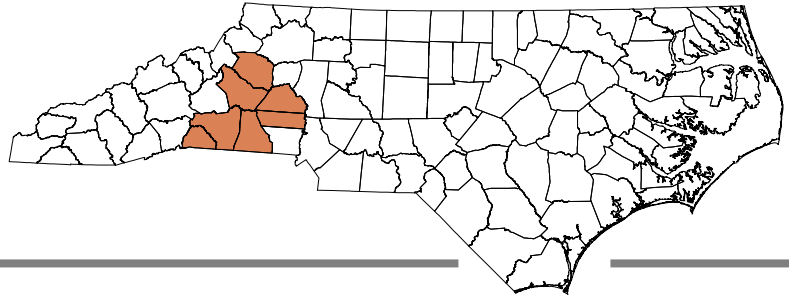

Dwarf-flowered heartleaf

Hexastylis naniflora

(Dwarf-flowered wild ginger)

Threatened (March 9, 1989)



Description: Dwarf-flowered heartleaf is a low-growing, spicy-smelling, evergreen perennial herb that spreads via rhizomes. Leaves are heart-shaped, alternate, leathery, untoothed, and 1.6-2.4 inches (4-6 cm) long and wide. Each leaf is supported by a long, thin petiole (stem) that rises directly from the subsurface rhizome. The solitary flowers are fleshy, firm, grow at the end of short stalks, and often are under forest litter and leaves near the base of the leaf petioles. The flowers are jug-shaped, .23-5 inches (6-13 mm) long and .15-.27 inches (4-7 mm) in diameter, and have a tubular calyx, ranging in color from brown to greenish or purple.

Life History: Flowering occurs from mid March to early June; fruiting begins in late May. Seeds may be distributed via ants. Flowers are pollinated by flies and thrips. Adults are rhizomatous and seedling growth has been observed in clumps of mature plants.

Habitat: Along bluffs and north-facing slopes, boggy areas along streams, and adjacent hillsides and ravines with acid, sandy loam soils in deciduous forests. Usually associated with *Kalmia latifolia* or *Asimina triloba*. Typically found on these soil types: Pacolet or Madison gravelly sandy loam, or Musella fine sandy loam.

Distribution: Endemic to a nine-county area in the western upper piedmont of North Carolina and South Carolina. In North Carolina, found in Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Lincoln, Polk, and Rutherford counties.

Threats: Habitat and population destruction from residential and road construction, urbanization, and associated erosion.

Management Recommendations: Protection of habitat of existing populations. Increase public awareness through education.

Sources: Radford et al. 1964, USFWS 1992a.

