



**Common Name:** AMERICAN LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY

**Scientific Name:** *Convallaria majuscula* Greene

**Other Commonly Used Names:** none

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** *Convallaria majalis* var. *montana* (Rafinesque) H.E. Ahles,  
*Convallaria montana* Rafinesque

**Family:** Ruscaceae (ruscus) or Liliaceae (lily)

**Rarity Ranks:** G4?/S1S2

**State Legal Status:** Rare

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** none

**Description:** Perennial **herb** often forming small colonies of widely spaced plants. **Leaves** 6 - 14 inches (15 - 35 cm) long and 2 - 5 inches wide, 2 - 3 per plant, with pointed tip and leaf base tapering to a leaf stalk that is tightly wrapped around the other leaf stalks. **Flower stalk** less than ½ the length of the leaves, rising from the base of the plant. **Flower clusters** with 5 - 15 white, nodding flowers. **Flowers** ¼ - ⅜ inch (6 - 10 mm) long, bell-shaped with 6 upturned tips, fragrant. **Fruit** a round, reddish-orange berry about ¼ inch (7 - 9 mm) wide.

**Similar Species:** European lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) forms colonies of closely spaced plants that may persist at old home sites. Its leaves are 4 - 6 inches (10 - 15 cm) long, and the stalk of the flower cluster is longer than ½ the length of the leaves.

**Related Rare Species:** None in Georgia.

**Habitat:** Rocky, montane forests near ridgelines, often under white oak or northern red oak.

**Life History:** American lily-of-the-valley is a perennial herb that reproduces vegetatively by sprouting from underground stems (rhizomes). It also reproduces sexually, attracting insect pollinators by the sweet fragrance of the flowers and by the nectar-producing glands at the base of the inside of the flower. Lily-of-the-valley plants are toxic due to the presence of at least 38 cardenolide glycoside compounds. European species of lily-of-the-valley are used as a food plant by the larvae of some butterflies and moths.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (April–June) and fruiting (June–August).

**Range:** Georgia, north to Pennsylvania and west to Kentucky.

**Threats:** Logging, overbrowsing by deer, digging by feral hogs.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** At least six populations are known, all in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Maintain hardwood canopy cover. Avoid clearcutting. Reduce the size of Georgia's deer herd. Eradicate feral hogs.

**Selected References:**

Chafin, L.G. 2007. Field guide to the rare plants of Georgia. State Botanical Garden of Georgia and University of Georgia Press, Athens.

FNA. 2003. Flora of North America, Vol. 26, Magnoliophyta: Liliidae: Liliales and Orchidales. Oxford University Press, New York.

Horn, D., T. Cathcart, T.E. Hemmerly, and D. Duhl. 2005. Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley, and the southern Appalachians. Lone Pine Publishing, Auburn, Washington.

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer. Arlington, Virginia.  
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>

Radford, A.E., H.E. Ahles, and C.R. Bell. 1968. Manual of the vascular flora of the Carolinas. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

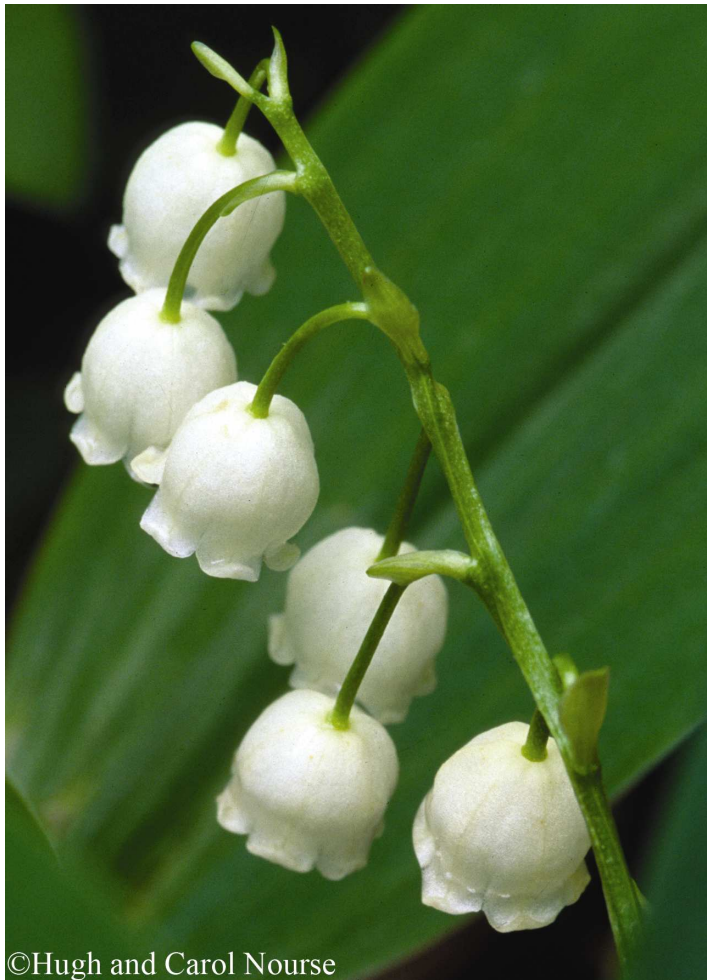
Weakley, A.S. 2007. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill.

**Author of species account:** Linda G. Chafin

**Date Compiled or Updated:**

L. Chafin, Nov. 2007: original account

K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added pictures



©Hugh and Carol Nourse  
Inflorescence

# AMERICAN LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY

*Convallaria majuscula*

