

October 2013 Plant of the Month



Closed Gentian

Gentiana andrewsii Griesb.

October's *Plant of the Month* is a special herbaceous plant with the notoriety for hiding in plain sight. The closed gentian is a member of the Gentianaceae. It is a late flower species, often starting its yearly blooming in late August and September. It flowers over a long period lasting into October. The species is adapted to open wet meadows and has been found throughout Northern New Jersey with records for Camden County on the Inner Coastal Plain. The New Jersey Natural Heritage Program tracks this plant and has designated it as a S2 species.

It has simple, opposite leaves similar to the Bouncing Bet, *Saponaria officinalis*. It is often tangled with other wetland species making its presence difficult to determine until it produces the characteristic flower clusters.

Keep your eyes out for this late flowering species and it will be worth the search if you find this plant that is often hiding in plain sight.

JRA, 9/13