

# Plant that vanished from Vermont 108 years ago accidentally rediscovered, botanists say

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Floerkea proserpinacoides. Credit: cassi saari Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons Attribution-[Share Alike 4.0 International license](#).

A plant that hasn't been seen in Vermont since 1916 was just rediscovered by accident, the state's Fish and Wildlife Department said.

Botanist Grace Glynn had been looking for a lost species called false mermaid-weed (*Floerkea proserpinacoides*) for about a year.

In early May, turtle technician Molly Parren was surveying the wood turtle habitat in Addison County when she noticed some rare wild garlic and snapped a photo, sending the picture to Glynn, Vermont Biz reported.

Glynn looked at the photo and noticed something in the corner of the shot: a delicate green herb with tiny flowers, the outlet reported. She called Parren immediately.

"You won't believe what you just accidentally found," Glynn said when Parren picked up, according to the Vermont Biz.

It was the elusive false mermaid-weed, state officials said in a May 28 Facebook post.

According to Native Plant Trust, false mermaid-weed is very rare in New England, surviving in primarily wet areas like floodplain forests and swamps.

False mermaid-weed's bloom is quick, as it is one of the first [plants](#) to emerge every spring and dies off by mid-June. This can make it even

harder to spot, unless you look at just the right time.

Glynn retraced Parren's steps and found more false mermaid-weed "on a private streamside parcel," officials said.

She went back again a second time and found even more on public land downstream from the first sighting, according to state experts.

A photo shows Glynn wading through ostrich ferns, which shade the false mermaid-weed as it disperses seeds, officials said.

"It's a remarkable rediscovery," botanist Art Gilman told Vermont Biz. "False mermaid-weed adds a significant element to our biodiversity."

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says that this tiny plant's rediscovery after over a century is proof that good stewardship by landowners and conservationists can make a huge difference.

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