

## Virginia Land Snails

### *Carychium exile* I. Lea, 1842

Family: Ellobiidae  
Common name: Ice Thorn

#### Identification

Width: 0.6-0.8 mm  
Height: 1.7-2.2 mm  
Whorls: 5+

This shell is sculptured with close, regular, rounded radial ridges that are especially distinct on the final two whorls. These ridges may be less distinct on older specimens. Its very similar congener *Carychium clappi* has sharp-edged, flat-topped ridges (J. Nekola, pers obs). *Carychium exile* is taller than *C. exiguum* and tapers more gradually towards the summit. *Carychium exile* has a convex body whorl. The outer lip is vertical, aligning the reflected aperture with the overall angle of the shell. The aperture is thickened within, and a small lamella that continues farther into the shell can be seen on the parietal wall.

#### Ecology

Like *C. clappi* and *C. nannodes*, this snail can be found on wooded slopes and talus, buried in deep piles of leaves and in pits left by the roots of fallen trees. Individuals are often found sandwiched in the biofilm between two leaves. In Tennessee, *C. exile* was significantly associated with a number of habitat factors, including soil moisture, leaf litter, neutral soils on limestone, very steep slopes, and late stages of forest succession (Coney et al., 1982). It is rarely found with *C. clappi* or *C. nannodes* (Hubricht 1985).

#### Taxonomy

No synonyms are known for this species.

#### Distribution

Though patchy in occurrence, this snail is widespread throughout the Eastern and Midwestern United States and Canadian provinces, as far west as the Dakotas, north to Quebec, and south to Mississippi. In Virginia it is reported from counties throughout the western part of the state. Some older records of this species may be examples of the more recently-described *C. clappi*.

NatureServe Global Rank: G5

NatureServe State Rank: S4

Ken Hotopp, Meegan Winslow 11/2012

#### Range Map



Photo(s): *Carychium exile* has a finely-ridged shell; by Larry Watrous ©.

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