Carolina hedge-nettle
(Stachys caroliniana)

Description

*Stachys* is a genus of shrubs and annual or perennial herbs with stems varying from 50-300 cm tall with simple, opposite, triangular leaves, 1-14 cm long with serrate margins. In most species, the leaves are softly hairy. The flowers are 1-2 cm long, clustered in the axils of the leaves on the upper part of the stem. Their corolla is 5-lobed with top lobe forming a “hood”, and flowers varying from white to pink, purple, red, or pale yellow. The Carolina hedge-nettle is perennial, with fibrous roots from pale, shallow rhizomes. Its stems are strictly erect, to 0.5 m tall, scarcely branched except occasionally at lowest node of inflorescence. This taxon is differentiated from all other taxa in the southeastern United States by its dense, short, uniform stem pubescence, relatively short calyx lobes, and white corollas.

Range

The first known collection of this plant was in 1977 from Charleston County on the south side of the Santee River within the Santee Coastal Reserve. The same plant was not collected again until 1990 in Georgetown County from its only other known locality, approximately 8 miles (13 km) to the northeast of the first collection on the north side of the Santee River. The second site is 10.4 miles (17 km) south of the city of Georgetown on the west-central part of Cat Island within the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center. No other collections of this hedge-nettle are known.

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Status

NatureServe last reviewed the species on July 20, 2015 and its Rounded Global Status is G1 - Critically Imperiled. Known only from the Santee River delta of South Carolina, the authors of the species account indicate that Carolina hedge-nettle is very rare and only occurs in relict populations. It is not represented from other places by known herbarium collections.

Threats

The threats to the species have yet to be assessed but rarity is surely the greatest threat at this time. Herbicide use near the only known populations could pose serious risk as would threats of collection due to its extreme rarity.

Management/Protection Needs

Protection of the only known existing sites should be of paramount importance. Increased survey effort for the species may lead to identification of additional populations.

References


Contact

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
South Carolina Field Office
843/727-4707
april_punsalan@fws.gov