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Conserving South Carolina's At-Risk Species: *Species facing threats to their survival*

Godfrey's stitchwort (*Minuartia godfreyi*)



Photo credit: Gil Nelson

Description

Godfrey's stitchwort is a prostrate, perennial herb, growing 1-4 dm tall. Leaves are linear and 10-35 mm long. Flowers are axillary. Petals are 6-10 mm long. It blooms from April through June.

Range

The plant ranges from middle Tennessee to coastal North Carolina down to Florida. Within this wide range there are very few known extant populations and those are widely scattered. Somewhat cryptic, there is the potential that more populations could be found in additional calcareous marsh or herbaceous wetland sites within the known range. In South Carolina, Godfrey's stitchwort was only known from Horry county and is potentially extirpated.

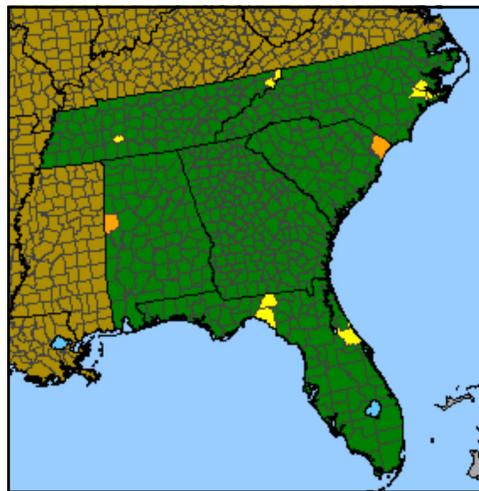
Habitat

Godfrey's stitchwort can be found in a variety of wetland conditions, ranging from tidal freshwater marshes, moist creek bank slopes, roadside ditches, to Delta post oak flatwoods, wet saline prairies, and open mesic meadows. It is irregularly distributed with isolated and scattered locations in the Coastal Plain and

Mountains. In South Carolina, the historic habitat was described as marshy, open woodland over a marl substrate.

Status

NatureServe's Rounded Global Status is G1 - Critically Imperiled. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was petitioned to list the species in April 2010 and in September 2011, published a substantial 90-day finding indicating listing may be warranted. Many of the historic populations have disappeared or are no longer extant.



Godfrey's stitchwort (yellow counties - extant; orange counties - extirpated); map generated from Kartesz, J.T. 2015. *Floristic Synthesis of North America, Version 1.0. Biota of North America Program (BONAP)*.

Threats

The primary threat to this species is habitat destruction. Major roadside renovations could destroy occurrences. Since the plant is extremely rare throughout its range, the destruction of forests and wetlands and the conversion of natural forests to commercial forests are also threats to the species.

Management/Protection Needs

Increase survey efforts for the species.

Protect known sites from drainage or other hydrologic alterations. In open herbaceous marshes where the species is known to occur, maintenance of that open state needs to be conducted as these plants are not known from wet forests, only herbaceous wetlands. Several populations are wet roadside ditches or roadside wetlands in areas which have a calcareous or circumneutral substrate. The management of these roadside populations is important for the conservation of these populations.

References

NatureServe. 2015. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://explorer.natureserve.org>.

Weakley, A.S. 2015. Flora of the Southern and Mid-Atlantic States. Working Draft of 21 May 2015. University of North Carolina Herbarium (NCU), North Carolina Botanical Garden, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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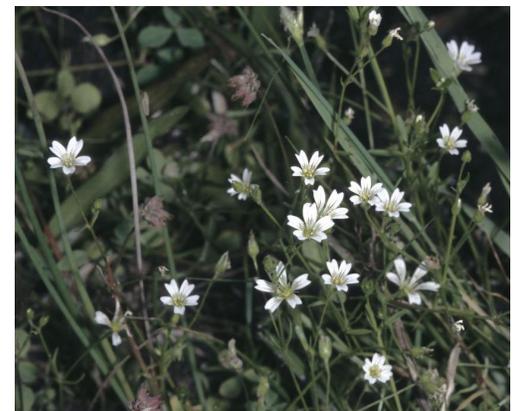


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