



Common Name: SHOWY SKULLCAP

Scientific Name: *Scutellaria serrata* Andrzejowski

Other Commonly Used Names: serrate skullcap

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Rarity Ranks: G4G5/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial **herb** with **stems** up to 10 - 24 inches tall (25 - 60 cm), 4-sided, mostly hairless. **Leaves** 1½ - 5 inches (4 - 13 cm) long, 1¼ - 2¾ inches (3 - 7 cm) wide, oval with pointed tips, rounded or wedge-shaped (not heart-shaped) bases, and hairy, toothed edges; leaves opposite, with fewer than 8 pairs per stem. **Leaf stalks** ¾ - 1¼ inches (1 - 3 cm) long, hairy, with leaf tissue extending slightly down the stalk. **Flower cluster** usually solitary at the top of the stem, the lowest pair of flowers with small leaves beneath them. **Flower** about 1 inch (2 - 3 cm) long, blue-violet, with an erect tube, hood-like upper lip, and pale, 2-lobed, spreading, lower lip. A small green cup (**calyx**) with a “bump” (scutellum) on the upper side surrounds the base of the flower; it has pointed, but not gland-tipped, hairs. **Fruits** consist of 4 tiny nutlets enclosed by the non-glandular calyx.

Similar Species: Several other skullcaps occur in showy skullcap habitat. Showy skullcap is distinguished by its more or less hairless, non-glandular stem; flowers longer than ¾ inch (2 cm); and its non-glandular calyx.

Related Rare Species: See Altamaha skullcap (*Scutellaria altamaha*), large-flowered skullcap (*Scutellaria montana*), and Ocmulgee skullcap (*S. ocmulgee*) elsewhere on this website. Five other species of skullcap are of Special Concern in Georgia: *S. arenicola*, *S. leonardii*, *S. mellichampii*, *S. nervosa*, and *S. saxatilis*.

Habitat: Rich hardwood forests, usually on west-facing slopes.

Life History: Showy skullcap is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually; although it often grows in clumps and patches, it does not spread by stolons or rhizomes. Little else is known about its life history. Other skullcap species are typically pollinated by long-tongued bees and moths; wasps are known to cut holes in the base of some skullcap flower tubes and suck out nectar without carrying out the pollination that bees do.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (late April–early June).

Range: Georgia, north to New York and west to Mississippi and Missouri.

Threats: Clearing, logging, and development in mountain forests.

Georgia Conservation Status: Only one population is known; it occurs in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect high-elevation and rich hardwood forests from logging and off-road-vehicle traffic.

Selected References:

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