

Common Name: GEORGIA BEAKSEEDGE

Scientific Name: *Rhynchospora culixa* Gale

Other Commonly Used Names: Georgia beakrush

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Rhynchospora harveyi* W. Boott var. *culixa* Gale (Kral)

Family: Cyperaceae (sedge)

Rarity Ranks: G1Q/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: OBL

Description: Perennial **herb** forming clumps of grass-like leaves. **Leaves** 6 - 12 inches (15 - 30 cm) long about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch (1.5 - 2 mm) wide, flattened, not wiry or thread-like, mostly crowded at the base of the plant, with a raised midvein. **Flowering stalk** up to 28 inches (50-70 cm) tall, with a few scattered leaves and 1 - 4 **flower clusters**. Each **flower cluster** contains several narrow, pointed spikelets and 1 or more leafy bracts which are longer than the clusters, except for the topmost cluster, where the leafy bract is shorter than the cluster. **Spikelets** less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (5 - 6 mm) long, oval or lance-shaped, pointed, covered with reddish-brown scales and containing 1 - 2 seed-like fruits. **Fruit** about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch (1.5 mm) long; lens-shaped, slightly flattened in cross-section, the surfaces covered with horizontal rows of tiny pits alternating with pale, smooth ridges; 6 barbed bristles are attached to the base of the fruit and are less than half the length of the fruit. Beaksedge species are difficult to identify in the field; 10x or higher magnification is needed to examine the fruits.

Similar Species: Harvey's beaksedge (*Rhynchospora harveyi* var. *harveyi*) occurs in similar but somewhat drier habitats than Georgia beaksedge. It is larger, up to 51 inches (130 cm) tall, and has denser flower clusters, almost all with leafy bracts that are longer than the clusters; its fruit appears slightly swollen in cross-section, and the surface appears honeycombed or nearly smooth due to the fineness of its pits and ridges; there are 6 bristles attached to the base of the fruit but 3 are usually very tiny.

Related Rare Species: At least 15 species of beaksedge are rare in Georgia. See bearded beaksedge (*Rhynchospora crinipes*), coastal beaksedge (*R. pleiantha*), pineland beaksedge (*R. punctata*), solitary beaksedge (*R. solitaria*), and Thorne's beaksedge (*R. thornei*) on this website.

Habitat: Moist pine flatwoods and savannas, edges of seepage bogs at the base of sandhills.

Life History: Georgia beaksedge is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually as well as vegetatively by producing lateral offshoots from the base of the plants. All beaksedge flowers are

wind-pollinated; their fruits are dispersed by water and gravity, and also by animals, assisted by the tiny, barbed bristles at the base of the fruit which attach to fur and feathers.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during fruiting (late May–early July)

Range: Georgia and Florida.

Threats: Fire suppression, clearing, logging, and other timbering activities. Ditching, draining, and filling wetlands.

Georgia Conservation Status: Nine populations have been documented, although none have been seen since 1993, and none occur on conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years, allowing fires to burn into edges of shrub bogs. Avoid mechanical disturbances such as clearing, logging, and site preparation. Avoid ditching, draining, or altering water table in flatwoods.

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