



Common Name: PINELAND WILD PETUNIA

Scientific Name: *Ruellia pinetorum* Fernald

Other Commonly Used Names: stalked wild petunia, pine barrens ruellia

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Ruellia pedunculata* Torrey ex Gray ssp. *pinetorum* (Fernald) R.W. Long

Family: Acanthaceae (wild petunia)

Rarity Ranks: G5T3T4/SH

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial **herb** with reddish, minutely hairy, forking stems 4 - 16 inches (10 - 40 cm) tall. **Leaves** $\frac{3}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (2 - 4 cm) long and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (1.8 cm) wide, oval, opposite, with smooth or wavy margins and very short or no leaf stalks. **Flowers** 1 - $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch (3 - 4 cm) long and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch (4 cm) wide, purple, with 5 spreading petals; **calyx** with sepals very narrow, almost bristle-like, nearly hairless but covered with cystoliths (mineral concretions that appear as dots or scales, visible only with 10x magnification); **flower stalk** about 1 inch (3 cm) long, straight. **Fruit** a hairless capsule about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.2 - 1.5 cm) long.

Similar Species: Carolina wild-petunia (*Ruellia caroliniensis*) is usually unbranched; its leaf stalks are up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) long, and its flowers lack stalks.

Related Rare Species: Glade wild-petunia (*Ruellia strepens*, Georgia Watch List) occurs in woodlands with calcium-rich soils and on limestone glades in Floyd and Catoosa Counties; its sepals are lance-shaped and about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (2 - 4 mm) wide. Also see night-blooming wild petunia (*R. noctiflora*) on this website.

Habitat: Dry to wet pine flatwoods and floodplains.

Life History: Pineland wild petunia is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually. Little else is known about its biology, but closely related species of *Ruellia* are well known. The flowers of other members of this genus open in early morning and wither by late afternoon. They are visited by a variety of bees and flies but only long-tongued bees, which probe the base of the flower tube for nectar, actually effect pollination. Some species of *Ruellia* are self-fertile. Research on pineland wild petunia is needed to determine more details of its life history.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (May–September).

Range: Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

Threats: Fire suppression, logging and other clearing, conversion of habitat to pine plantations and developments.

Georgia Conservation Status: Plants were last seen in 1966 in the Altamaha River floodplain, near or possibly within Big Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Burn pine flatwoods every 2 - 3 years during the growing season; avoid clearcutting, plowing fire lanes, and bedding. Avoid clearcutting in floodplains.

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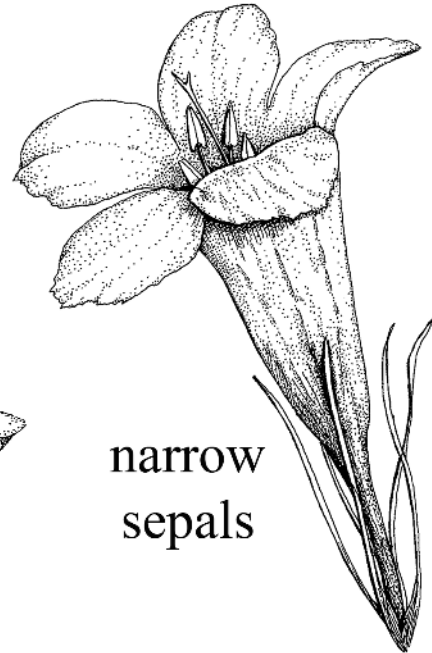
Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Aug. 2008: original account

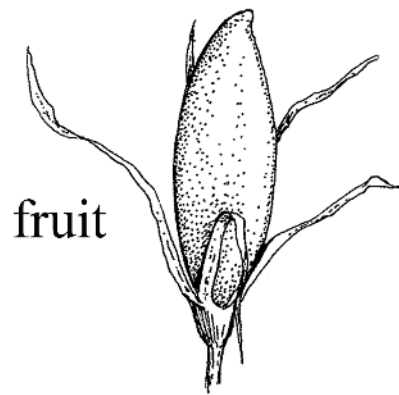
K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures

PINELAND WILD PETUNIA

Ruellia pinetorum



narrow
sepals



fruit

J.C. Putnam H.