



Common Name: BEAUTIFUL HAWTHORN

Scientific Name: *Crataegus pulcherrima* Ashe

Other Commonly Used Names: beautiful haw

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Crataegus macilenta* Beadle, *C. lenis* Beadle, *C. ancisa* Beadle, *C. opima* Beadle, *C. inanis* Beadle, *C. illustris* Beadle, *C. incilis* Beadle, *C. intricata* Lange

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Rarity Ranks: G2G4/S1?

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Small **tree** to about 25 feet (7.5 meters) tall and up to 6 inches (15 cm) in diameter; bark of main trunk brown and furrowed. **Twigs** with many slender, straight, shiny, brown thorns, $\frac{3}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (2 - 4 cm) long. **Leaves** $1\frac{3}{16}$ - $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches (3 - 6 cm) long, dark green on the upper surface, yellow-green on the lower surface, oval, evenly lobed, with tapering bases; margins toothed, each tooth tipped with a tiny red gland; primary veins straight and parallel, secondary veins nearly invisible; **leaf stalks** up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) long, usually with reddish glands. **Flower clusters** with 5 - 10 flowers. **Flowers** $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 inch (1.2 - 2.5 cm) wide, with 5 white or pink-tinged petals and 20 stamens, each tipped with a dark pink anther. **Fruit** small, usually $\frac{3}{16}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (0.5 - 1 cm) wide, nearly round, usually red (occasionally yellow) when mature, with dry or mealy flesh and 3 - 5 seeds; fruits may persist through the winter.

Similar Species: Many hawthorn species are similar. Beautiful hawthorn is distinguished by the combination of: straight twigs; evenly lobed leaves with glandular margins and straight, parallel veins; flowers with 20 stamens; small fruits; and brown, furrowed bark.

Related Rare Species: See three-flowered hawthorn (*Crataegus triflora*) and Rome hawthorn (*Crataegus aemula*) on this website.

Habitat: Deciduous, upland hardwood forests and hardwood-pine woodlands in ravines and on moist slopes, with iron-rich soils high in clay or loam.

Life History: Little is known about the biology of beautiful hawthorn except that it reproduces sexually and does not spread vegetatively. Other hawthorns are pollinated by bees, butterflies, and beetles that are attracted by their showy flowers and nectar. Hawthorn fruits are eaten by birds, which disperse the seeds; seed germination is improved if the seed passes through a bird's digestive tract and if the seed has been through one cold winter.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (late March–mid-April), when leaves are half or more expanded, and during fruiting (September–October).

Range: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Threats: Logging, clearing, and conversion of habitat to pine plantations and developments.

Georgia Conservation Status: Two populations are known on public lands in southwest Georgia; one population in Floyd County occurs on private land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect high quality hardwood forests from clearing and development. Avoid use of fire in these habitats.

Selected References:

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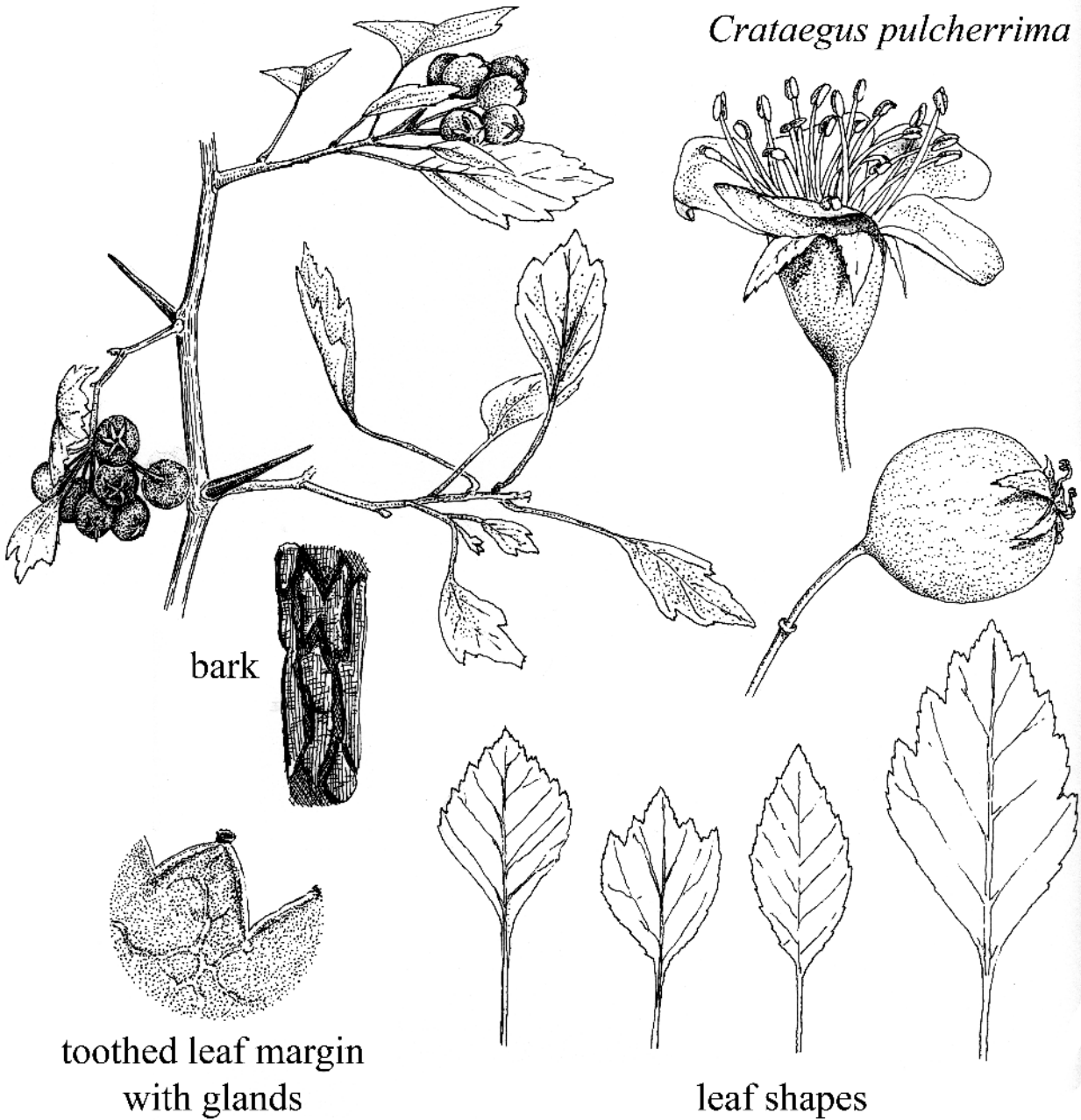
Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Jan. 2009: original account

K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added pictures



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J.C. Putnam H.

