



**Common Name:** YELLOW NAILWORT

**Scientific Name:** *Paronychia virginica* Sprengel

**Other Commonly Used Names:** Virginia whitlow-wort, Appalachian nailwort

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** *Paronychia dichotoma* (Linnaeus) Nuttall

**Family:** Caryophyllaceae (pink)

**Rarity Ranks:** G4/S1

**State Legal Status:** Endangered

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** none

**Description:** Perennial, evergreen **herb** with wiry, sprawling **stems** up to 18 inches (45 cm) long, branching from a woody crown. **Leaves** up to 1¼ inches (3 cm) long, needle-like, sharply pointed, leathery, bluish-green, opposite, evergreen. **Flower clusters** at the ends of branches. **Flowers** very small, with 5 yellow **sepals** less than ⅛ inch (3 mm) long, each sepal holds a

stamen and is tipped with a sharp, triangular spine; there are no petals. **Fruit** about  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch (2 mm) long, oval.

**Similar Species:** There are several other nailwort species in Georgia; most have oval or rounded leaves and pointed, but not spiny, sepals. Yellow nailwort is the only nailwort species in Georgia with both needle-like leaves and spine-tipped sepals.

**Related Rare Species:** Silvery nailwort (*Paronychia argyrocoma*, Special Concern) occurs on sandstone cliffs and rocky mountaintops in northern Georgia; it has narrow leaves about 1 inch long, covered with silky hairs; its sepals are brownish-green with white edges and white, pointed tips. Pineland nailwort (*P. patula*) and Rugel's nailwort (*P. rugellii*), both Special Concern in Georgia, occur in longleaf pine-turkey oak sandhills in southwest Georgia; both have oval to lance-shaped leaves and pointed (though not spine-tipped) sepals.

**Habitat:** Shallow, rocky soil over magnesium-rich, ultramafic rock.

**Life History:** Yellow nailwort is an evergreen, perennial herb with bisexual flowers that produce nectar from the base of the flower. One species of nailwort (*Paronychia pulvinata*) is pollinated by ants but it is not known if ants visit other nailwort species. It is possible that the spiny tips of the sepals attach to animal fur and aid in seed dispersal.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (mid-August–early October).

**Range:** Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

**Threats:** Logging, clearing, and development of habitat. Herbicide use in power line rights-of-way. Invasion by exotic pest plants.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Only one population is known; it occurs on a private utility right-of-way.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Hand clear or use prescribed fire to create sunny openings. Protect serpentine glades and outcrops from logging, clearing, development, and herbicide use. Eradicate exotic pest plants.

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*Paronyhia virginica*

