



Common Name: CROOMIA

Scientific Name: *Croomia pauciflora* (Nuttall) Torrey

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Cissampelos pauciflora* Nuttall

Family: Stemonaceae (stemona)

Rarity Ranks: G3/S1

State Legal Status: Threatened

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: UPL

Description: Perennial **herb** with an erect, somewhat fleshy **stem** about 6 inches (15 cm) tall (occasionally up to 11 inches or 28 cm), occurring in patches of several plants connected by underground stems. **Leaves** up to 3 inches (8 cm) long, 4 - 7 leaves clustered at the top of the stem, alternate but appearing whorled or spiraled when viewed from above; heart-shaped with parallel veins curving from the leaf base to the leaf tip. **Flowers** less than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (1 cm) wide,

nodding below the leaves on stalks $\frac{3}{8}$ - 1 inch (1 - 3 cm) long, with 4 green petals and 4 maroon stamens with orange tips. **Fruit** an oval, fleshy, green capsule, about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (1 cm) long.

Similar Species: Several plants have similar leaves. Wild yam (*Dioscorea* spp.) is a climbing vine with whorled or opposite leaves. Climbing carrion-flower (*Smilax herbacea*) is a vine with tendrils. Upright carrion-flower (*S. ecirrata*) has wiry stems and leaves with cross-veins. Sarsaparilla-vine (*S. pumila*) is a ground vine with hairy leaves.

Related Rare Species: Croomia is the only member of this family in North America; its closest relatives occur in east Asia.

Habitat: Rich, moist, deciduous forests in ravines and on river bluffs.

Life History: Croomia reproduces vegetatively, sending up shoots from a network of underground stems (rhizomes); however, this spread is slow, with rhizomes branching only every few years. It also produces fruits and seeds, but nothing is known about pollination, seed dispersal, or seed germination.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (April–May) and fruiting (June–July), however, plants may be identified by their leaves until late summer.

Range: Georgia, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle.

Threats: Logging and conversion of habitat to pine plantations. Overbrowsing by deer. Trampling by cattle and digging by feral hogs. Invasion by exotic pest plants, especially Japanese honeysuckle.

Georgia Conservation Status: About 15 populations are currently known, 2 of these occur on conservation lands, and 2 on military lands.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Avoid logging slopes and ravines. Reduce the size of Georgia's deer herd. Control exotic pest plants, especially Japanese honeysuckle, and feral hogs. Prevent grazing and cattle trampling in hardwood forests.

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Author of species account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Sept. 2007: original account

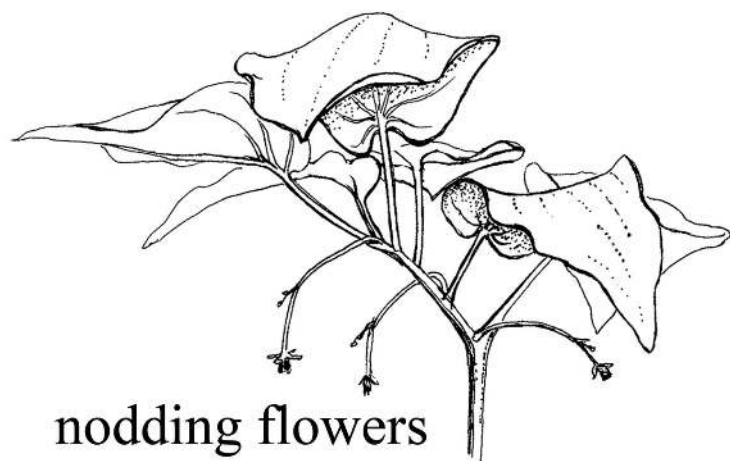
K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added pictures



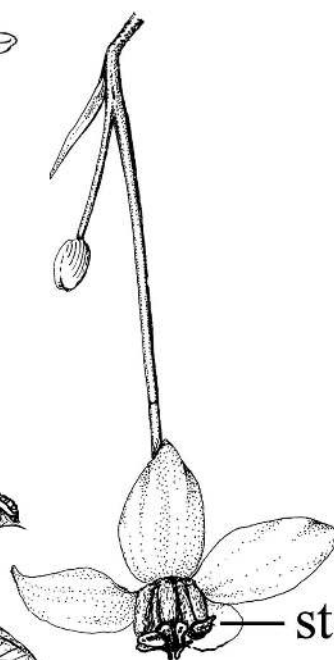
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Flower

CROOMIA
Croomia pauciflora



nodding flowers



stamens



parallel
veins

J.C. Putnam H.