

Common Name: DOTTED BEAKSEEDGE

Scientific Name: *Rhynchospora punctata* Gale

Other Commonly Used Names: pineland beaksedge, dotted beakrush

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Phaeocephalum punctatum* (Elliott) House

Family: Cyperaceae (sedge)

Rarity Ranks: G1?/S1?

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: OBL

Description: Perennial **herb** forming clumps of grass-like leaves. **Leaves** 4 - 10 inches (10 - 25 cm) long and less than ¼ inch (3 - 5 mm) wide, mostly crowded and spreading at the base of the plant, flattened, not wiry or thread-like, often curled, with white, rough, thickened margins.

Flowering stalk up to 27 - 39 inches (70 - 100 cm) tall, 3-angled, with a few scattered leaves and 3 - 5 **flower clusters**. Each **flower cluster** contains several narrow, pointed spikelets and several leafy bracts which are shorter than the clusters. **Spikelets** less than ¼ inch (5 mm) long, oval or lance-shaped, pointed, covered with reddish-brown scales and containing 1 - 3 seed-like fruits. **Fruit** less than ⅛ inch (2.5 mm) long including the pointed tip; reddish-brown; flattened in cross-section; the surface covered with wavy, horizontal ridges; the triangular “cap” (tubercle) at the top of the fruit has straight sides (not curved inwards); 6 barbed bristles are attached to the base of the fruit and extend at least to the base of the cap, sometimes to its tip; fruits are often malformed. Beaksedge species are difficult to identify in the field; 10x or higher magnification is needed to examine the fruits.

Similar Species: Flat-fruited beaksedge (*Rhynchospora compressa*) is very similar except for its fruit: its bristles are less than ⅔ the length of the fruit and the sides of the cap are curved inward. Elliott’s beaksedge (*R. elliottii*) fruits are less than 1/16 inch (1.7 mm) long and the bristles are usually longer than the whole fruit, including the cap; its flowering stalk is 32 - 60 inches (80 - 150 cm) tall.

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

Habitat: Moist (not wet) pine flatwoods and savannas, with longleaf pine and saw palmetto.

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

wind-pollinated and their fruits dispersed 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 (June–early July); fruits are required for identification.

Range: Georgia and Florida.

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

Georgia Conservation Status: Four populations have been documented, none on conservation land; none have been seen in the last 20 years.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years. Avoid mechanical disturbances such as clearing, logging, and site preparation. Avoid ditching, draining, or altering the water table in flatwoods.

Selected References:

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L. Chafin, July 2007: original account

K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures

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fruit and bristles