



Common Name: WOOD LILY

Scientific Name: *Lilium philadelphicum* Linnaeus

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Lilium umbellatum* Pursh, *Lilium andinum* Nuttall, *Lilium montanum* A. Nelson

Family: Liliaceae (lily)

Rarity Ranks: G5/S1

State Legal Status: Endangered

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: FACU-

Description: Perennial **herb** with a waxy **stem** up to 4 feet (1.2 meters) tall, rising from a stout underground bulb. **Leaves** are scattered along the stem and also whorled with 3 - 11 leaves per whorl. **Leaves** up to 4 inches long (2.9 - 10.2 cm) and 1 inch (0.3 - 2.3 cm) wide. **Flowers** bell-shaped, orange or red, facing upward at the top of the stem, solitary or in loose clusters of 2 - 6 flowers. **Tepals** 6 (3 petals + 3 sepals), 1¾ - 3¼ inches (4.5 - 8.2) long and up to 1¼ inch (1.6 - 3.2 cm) wide, erect and curved outward at the tips, narrowed and spotted with maroon at the base. **Fruit** an erect capsule 1 - 3 inches (2.2 - 7.7 cm) long.

Similar Species: Pine lily (*Lilium catesbaei*) occurs in pine flatwoods in the Coastal Plain. Its leaves are all alternate, not whorled.

Related Rare Species: See Michigan lily (*Lilium michiganense*) on this website.

Habitat: Wet meadows, forest openings, damp roadsides and rights-of-way; usually over sandstone.

Life History: Wood lily is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually as well as vegetatively. Young plants will send up a single leaf for several years before producing a stemmed plant. Once sufficient reserves are stored in its bulb, the plant will produce a flowering stem. Its flowers require cross-pollination in order to produce fruit and set seed, and are pollinated primarily by large swallowtail butterflies. The flowers remain open for 8 - 11 days, and, unlike many species' flowers, do not close or wither immediately after pollination takes place. The anthers (pollen-bearing structures at the tips of the stamens) close during a rain then re-open, an extremely rare occurrence among flowers with similar stamens. Wood lily produces seed, but nothing is known about seed dispersal. Most reproduction is believed to take place vegetatively, through the shedding of bulblets that develop from the scales of the underground bulb.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (late April–early June). Leaves wither soon after flowering.

Range: Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and north to Canada. Although widespread further north, it is rare in the southeastern U.S.

Threats: Herbicide application and badly timed mowing in roadside rights-of-way. Overbrowsing by deer. Logging and clearing in habitat. Plant poaching.

Georgia Conservation Status: Three populations are known, all on roadsides; 2 are on conservation land, but are vulnerable to plant poaching.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Use hand-clearing or carefully timed mowing, not herbicides, in rights-of-way. Avoid logging and clearing. Reduce size of deer population. Prosecute plant poachers.

Selected References:

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Smith, R.M. 1998. Wildflowers of the southern mountains. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.

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Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

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