

**Common Name:** PINELAND NAILWORT

**Scientific Name:** *Paronychia patula* Shinnery

**Other Commonly Used Names:** none

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** *Siphonochia diffusa* Chapman

**Family:** Caryophyllaceae (pink)

**Rarity Ranks:** G3G4/S1?

**State Legal Status:** Special Concern

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** none

**Description:** Annual or short-lived perennial **herb**, with sprawling to erect, much branched **stems** up to 20 inches (50 cm) long; stems are uniformly hairy with down-pointing hairs. **Leaves** needle-like, less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch (2 cm) long and less than  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm) wide, opposite, with a blunt tip. **Flower clusters** spherical, less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (5 mm) wide, densely packed with 15 - 50 very small flowers. **Flowers** cylindrical, with 5 tiny, papery sepals less than  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch (1.2 mm) long, reddish-brown with white margins and a tiny point at the tip; there are no petals. **Fruit** minute (0.4 - 0.6 mm), rounded, smooth.

**Similar Species:** Several species of *Paronychia* occur in sandhills, scrub, and other dry habitats in Georgia's Coastal Plain. American nailwort (*P. americana*) is an erect plant with spherical flower clusters; its sepals are green and have rounded, hooded tips; its stem is hairless or has curly hairs on one side of the stem only. Sand squares (*P. rugelii*) is an erect plant, and its flower clusters are held at the tips of symmetrically forking branches, the clusters forming "squares," when seen from above. Dune whitlow-wort (*P. baldwinii*) and coastal-plain nailwort (*P. herniarioides*) are sprawling, mat-forming plants with green flowers.

**Related Rare Species:** Silverling (*Paronychia argyrocoma*, Special Concern) occurs on sandstone and granite outcrops in the mountains and Piedmont. Also see yellow nailwort (*P. virginica*) on this web site.

**Habitat:** Dry pinelands and sandy river banks.

**Life History:** Little is known about the biology of pineland nailwort except that it is an annual (or rarely short-lived perennial) plant that reproduces sexually.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (July–September).

**Range:** Georgia, Alabama, and Florida.

**Threats:** Conversion of habitat to pine plantations, developments, and agriculture. Disturbance to ground cover by mechanical clearing and site preparation. Fire suppression and encroachment by woody shrubs.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Populations were known from 2 sites on private land but neither has been seen in many decades.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Protect sandhills and flatwoods from conversion to pine plantations and developments. Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years, preferably during the growing season.

**Selected References:**

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Small, J.K. 1933. Manual of the southeastern flora. 1972 Reprint Edition. Hafner Publishing Company, New York.

Weakley, A.S. 2008. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, northern Florida, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill.  
<http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm>

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L. Chafin, Feb. 2009: original account

K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures

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*Paronychia patula*

