



Common Name: THREE-FLOWERED HAWTHORN

Scientific Name: *Crataegus triflora* Chapman

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Rarity Ranks: G2G3/S1

State Legal Status: Threatened

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: **Shrub** to 20 feet (6 meters) tall, usually 3 - 6 feet (1 - 2 meters), with 1 - several trunks, scaly bark (on older trunks), hairy twigs, and **thorns** up to 2 inches (5 cm) long, often 3-pronged. **Leaves** up to 2¾ inches (2 - 7 cm) long, oval, with toothed margins, each tooth tipped with a tiny gland; both leaf surfaces usually velvety-hairy; **leaf stalks** with gland-tipped hairs. **Flowers** about 1 inch (2.5 - 3 cm) wide, with 5 white, rounded petals; 25 - 40 yellow stamens; and 5 toothed, gland-tipped sepals; flower stalks covered with gland-tipped hairs; flowers usually in clusters of 3, but may be as many as 7 per cluster. **Fruit** about ½ inch (1.2 - 1.5 cm) wide, round, red; flesh is orange and succulent when fully ripened, with 5 seeds per fruit.

Similar Species: Several other hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.) grow in similar habitats; three-flowered hawthorn is distinguished by its usually 3-flowered clusters, flowers with more than 20 stamens, glandular-hairy leaf stalks, and hairy, gland-toothed leaves with few or no lobes.

Related Rare Species: See Rome hawthorn (*Crataegus aemula*) and beautiful hawthorn (*Crataegus pulcherrima*) on this website.

Habitat: Moist, wooded ravines and slopes over limestone or mafic rock in northwest Georgia; Black Belt prairies with basic soils in the inner Coastal Plain.

Life History: Hawthorns reproduce sexually, attracting pollinators such as bees and beetles by their showy flowers and nectar. Fruits are eaten by birds, who disperse the seeds; seed germination is improved if the seed passes through a bird's digestive tract and if the seed has been through one cold winter. Plants will flower at four years, when they are about 3 feet (1 meter) tall. Three-flowered hawthorn is known to hybridize with (*Crataegus ashei*) and other hawthorns.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (April–May), when leaves are about ½ - ¾ expanded.

Range: Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and possibly Tennessee.

Threats: Logging, development, and other clearing. Infection by cedar-apple rust.

Georgia Conservation Status: Fifteen populations are known, 5 on conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Avoid clearcutting and other mechanical disturbances. Remove nearby red cedar trees, which host cedar-apple rust, a fungal blight that attacks three-flowered hawthorn.

Selected References:

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Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Aug. 2007: original account

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

G. Krakow. Apr. 2015: updated link to Louisiana DWF species account

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