



Common Name: PINELAND SCURF-PEA

Scientific Name: *Orbexilum virgatum* (Nuttall) Rydberg

Other Commonly Used Names: pineland leatherroot, slender leatherroot

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Psoralea virgata* Nuttall

Family: Fabaceae/Leguminosae (pea)

Rarity Ranks: G1/SH

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: FACU

Description: Perennial **herb** with 1 - 3 slender, hairy, erect **stems**, 1 - 2 feet (30 - 60 cm) tall. **Leaves** 1 - 3 inches (3 - 8 cm) long and less than ¼ inch (5 mm) wide at the base, tapering to a pointed tip, with a conspicuous midvein; upper surface with dark gland dots, lower surface hairy.

Lower leaves with **leaf stalks** up to 2 inches (5 cm) long, upper leaves with very short or no stalks; a pair of pointed bracts (**stipules**) about ¼ inch (4 - 8 mm) long are attached to the base of the leaf stalk. **Flower clusters** up to 2 inches (2 - 5 cm) long, compact, on a stalk rising from the angle of leaf and stem. **Flowers** less than ¾ inch (8 mm) long, purple or dark blue, typically pea flower-shaped with an erect banner petal. **Fruit** a rounded pod, with a ridged surface and a short beak.

Similar Species: Lupine scurf-pea (*Orbexilum lupinellum*) occurs throughout Georgia's Coastal Plain; it has similar flowers but its leaves have 3 - 7 narrow leaflets arranged like the fingers of a hand.

Related Rare Species: None in Georgia.

Habitat: Dry to moist longleaf pine-wiregrass savannas and flatwoods.

Life History: Nothing is known about the reproductive biology of this extremely rare plant. As with most pea-type flowers, pineland scurfpea is probably pollinated by bees.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (May–June) and fruiting (June–July). Plants are hard to see amongst other flatwoods vegetation.

Range: Georgia and two populations in northeast Florida.

Threats: Fire suppression and conversion of habitat to pine plantations.

Georgia Conservation Status: Two populations have been observed, but neither have been seen in several decades.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years during the growing season. Avoid clearcutting, bedding, plowing fire lanes, and other mechanical disturbances.

Selected References:

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Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, July 2008: original account

K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures

