



©Bruce A. Sorrie

Common Name: BOG SNEEZEWEED

Scientific Name: *Helenium brevifolium* (Nuttall) Wood

Other Commonly Used Names: shortleaf sneezeweed, shortleaf bitterweed

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Helenium curtissii* A. Gray

Family: Asteraceae/Compositae (aster)

Rarity Ranks: G4/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: OBL

Description: Perennial **herb** with winged, purple **stems**, 1 - 2½ feet (30 - 80 cm) tall, hairless except the top of the stem, which is covered with cottony hairs. **Basal leaves** ¾ - 6¾ inches (2 - 17 cm) long and ¼ - 1 inch (0.6 - 3 cm) wide, purple-tinged, spatula-shaped, mostly hairless, present during flowering. **Stem leaves** smaller, few and widely spaced, alternate, with cottony hairs on both surfaces; leaf bases extend well down along the stem, forming narrow wings.

Flower heads 1 - 10 per plant, with 8 - 24 yellow **ray flowers**, each ray with 3 or 5 teeth, and many reddish-brown **disk flowers**. **Fruit** dry and seed-like, with bristles.

Similar Species: Spring sneezeweed (*Helenium vernale*) has one flower head per plant and yellow disk flowers; its stems and leaves are hairless; its basal leaves are up to 10 inches long and much longer than wide. Southeastern sneezeweed (*H. pinnatifidum*) leaves barely extend down along the stem; flower stalks are rough-hairy; and it has 13 - 40 ray flowers crowded around a yellow disk. Southern sneezeweed (*H. flexuosum*) usually has many heads in a branched cluster; its disk flowers are purple with 4 lobes.

Related Rare Species: None in Georgia.

Habitat: Pine- or cypress-dominated wet savannas, seepage slopes, bogs, boggy stream banks, Atlantic white cedar swamps, and powerlines or other clearings through these habitats.

Life History: Although the life history of bog sneezeweed has not been studied, it is likely that it germinates in the fall as do other members of this genus, forming a rosette during the first year of growth and sending up a flowering stem in the second year. Like most species in the aster family, bog sneezeweed flowers are probably self-incompatible, requiring visits by a variety of insect pollinators to effect cross-pollination.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (late April–June) and fruiting (June–July).

Range: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia

Threats: Conversion of habitat to pine plantations, pastures, and developments; ditching and draining of wetlands; fire suppression; clearcutting and other mechanical clearing.

Georgia Conservation Status: Seven populations are known, only 2 on conservation lands.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years. Avoid plowing firebreaks in wetlands. Avoid clearcutting and other mechanical disturbances.

Selected References:

Chafin, L.G. 2007. Field guide to the rare plants of Georgia. State Botanical Garden of Georgia and University of Georgia Press, Athens.

Cronquist, A. 1980. Vascular flora of the southeastern United States, Vol. 1, Asteraceae. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

FNA. 2006. Flora of North America. Vol. 21, Magnoliophyta: Asteridae, Part 8: Asteraceae, Part 3. Oxford University Press, New York.

Godfrey, R.K. and J.W. Wooten. 1981. Aquatic and wetland plants of southeastern United States, Vol. 2, dicotyledons. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer. Arlington, Virginia.
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>

Weakley, A.S. 2007. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill. <http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm>

Author of species account: Linda G. Chafin

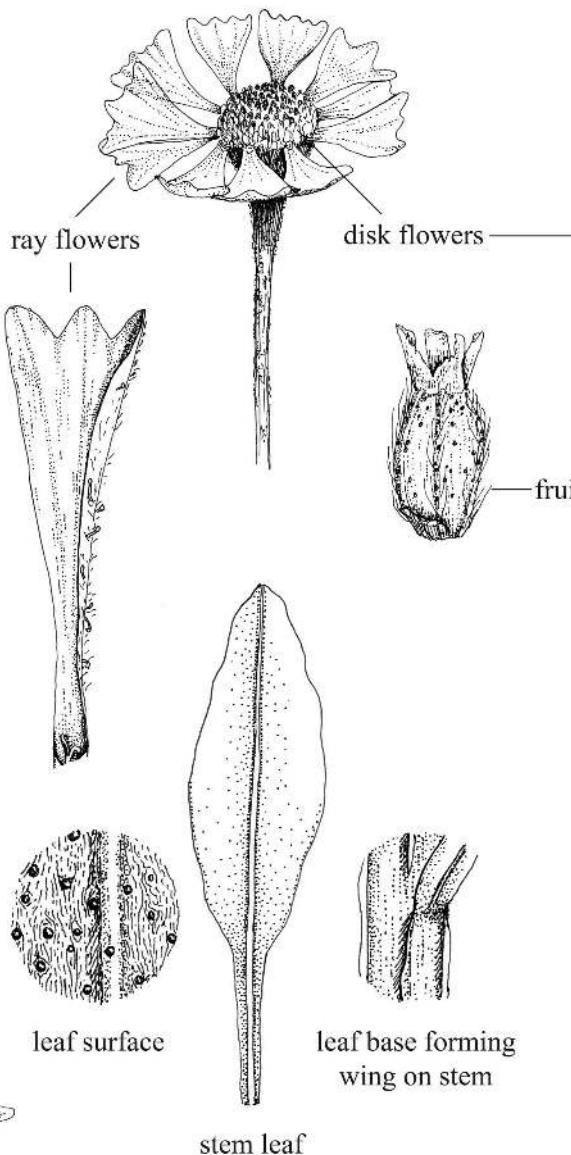
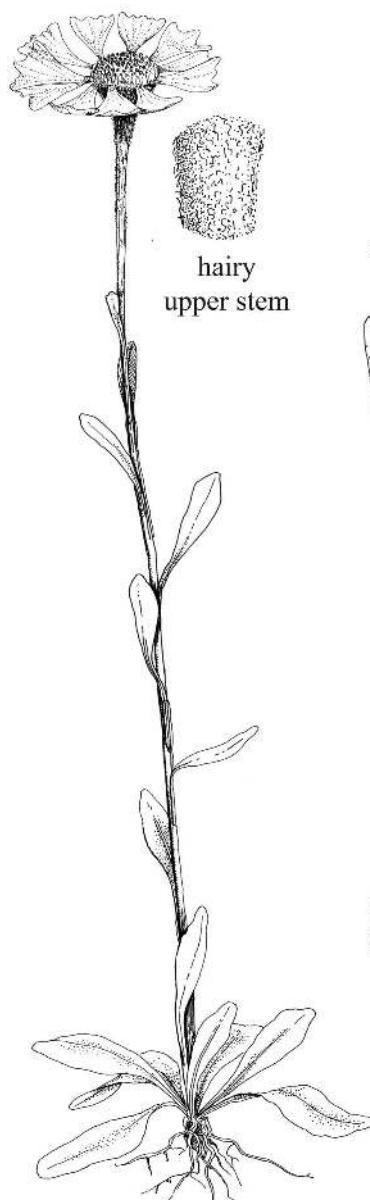
Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Mar. 2007: original account

K. Owers, Jan. 2010: added pictures



©Bruce A. Sorrie



BOG SNEEZEWEED
Helenium brevifolium

J.C. Putnam Jr.