



Common Name: SANDHILL GOLDEN-ASTER

Scientific Name: *Pityopsis pinifolia* (Elliott) Nuttall

Other Commonly Used Names: pine-leaved golden-aster, Taylor County golden-aster

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Chrysopsis pinifolia* Elliott, *Heterotheca pinifolia* (Elliott) Ahles

Family: Asteraceae/Compositae (aster)

Rarity Ranks: G4/S2

State Legal Status: Rare

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial **herb** with **stems** 8 - 20 inches (20 - 50) tall, branched in the upper third. **Leaves** $\frac{3}{8}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (1 - 4 cm) long near the base of the stem, becoming longer upwards, $1 - 2\frac{3}{4}$ inches (3 - 7 cm), very narrow and needle-like, alternate, crowded along the stem. **Flower heads** about 1 inch (2.5 cm) across, on long stalks. Each **flower head** composed of 9 - 13 yellow **ray flowers** and 15 - 35 yellow **disk flowers** in a flat, central disk; the base of the head is surrounded by several series of green **bracts** forming a cup (involucre) around the base, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (5.5 - 8 mm) high. **Fruits** less than $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (4 mm) long, dry, seed-like, ribbed.

Similar Species: Grass-leaved golden-aster (*Pityopsis graminifolia*) is common in dry habitats throughout Georgia; it has much longer, silky-hairy, grass-like leaves. Bitterweed (*Helenium amarum*) has numerous needle-like leaves; it has only 5 - 10 ray flowers, each with a broad, 3-toothed tip, and a raised and rounded central disk.

Related Rare Species: See few-flowered golden-aster (*Pityopsis oligantha*) on this website.

Habitat: Fall Line sandhills with scattered scrub oak and longleaf pine; old fields, clearings, rights-of-way, and pine plantations.

Life History: Sandhill golden-aster is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually as well as vegetatively by the spread of rhizomes. Its flowers are pollinated by a variety of butterflies and bees and the seeds are dispersed by wind, gravity, and small animals.

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

Range: Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Threats: Conversion of habitat to pine plantations and agriculture. Fire suppression.

Georgia Conservation Status: Ten populations are currently known, none on conservation land. Plants in Richmond County have not been seen in more than 100 years.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years. Avoid clearcutting, pine-straw raking, and other mechanical disturbances to the ground cover.

Selected References:

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<http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm>

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Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, July 2008: original account

K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures

