



Common Name: SAVANNA COWBANE

Scientific Name: *Oxypolis denticulata* (Baldwin) J.R. Edmondson

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Oxypolis ternata* (Nuttall) Heller

Family: Apiaceae/Umbelliferae (carrot)

Rarity Ranks: G3/S2

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: OBL

Description: Perennial **herb** with a smooth, slender **stem** up to 5 feet (150 cm) tall. **Leaves** divided into 3 very narrow, flat segments up to 8 inches (8 - 20 cm) long and usually much less than ¼ inch (2 - 6 mm) wide; **leaf stalks** up to 14 inches (35 cm) long, clasping the stem; stem leaves are few, and the uppermost leaves may be undivided. **Flower clusters (umbels)** flat-topped, containing 5 - 11 smaller, flat-topped clusters (**umbelets**), each with 8 - 12 flowers. **Flowers** about ⅛ inch (3 mm) wide, with 5 tiny, white **petals**. **Fruits** less than ¼ inch (3 - 5 mm) long, flattened and broadly oblong, with corky ribs and prominent wings.

Similar Species: Dropwort (*Oxypolis filiformis*) leaves are tubular and are not divided into segments. Cowbane (*O. rigidior*) leaves are divided into 5 - 11 leaflets up to 1½ inch (4 cm) wide. Bishop's-weeds (*Ptilimnium* spp.) leaves are either hollow and tubular or divided into many, very fine segments.

Related Rare Species: See Canby's dropwort (*Oxypolis canbyi*) elsewhere on this website. Canby's dropwort leaves are tubular.

Habitat: Wet pine savannas, hillside seepage bogs, seepy areas near Altamaha Grit, roadsides and utility rights-of-way through these habitats.

Life History: Savanna cowbane is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually and possibly vegetatively by sprouting from tubers. Its flowers are pollinated by a variety of flies, bees, beetles, and butterflies and is probably used as a food plant by the larvae of the black swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio polyxenes asterius*).

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (September–October) and fruiting (October–November).

Range: Coastal Plain of Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia.

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

Georgia Conservation Status: Twelve populations are known, five on conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years during the growing season. Avoid placing roads and firebreaks in wetlands. Avoid clearcutting, bedding, or other mechanical disturbances to the soil.

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.

Edmondson, J.R. 2005. A new combination in *Oxypolis* Rafinesque (Apiaceae). Novon 15(1): 109.

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. 2008. NatureServe Explorer. Arlington, Virginia.
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>

Radford, A.E., H.E. Ahles, and C.R. Bell. 1968. Manual of the vascular flora of the Carolinas. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

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>

Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, July 2008: original account

K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures



SAVANNA COWBANE
Oxypolis denticulata

