



Common Name: WHITE SUNNYBELLS

Scientific Name: *Schoenolirion albiflorum* (Rafinesque) R.R. Gates

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Schoenolirion elliottii* Feay ex Gray

Family: Liliaceae (lily), Agavaceae (agave), or Hyacinthaceae (hyacinth)

Rarity Ranks: G3/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: OBL

Description: Perennial **herb** rising from a vertical, underground stem (a rhizome, not a bulb).
Leaves 10 - 28 inches (26 - 72 cm) long, and about 1/8 inch (2 - 4 mm) wide, 4 - 7 leaves per plant, shorter than the flower stalk, with a groove running the length of the blade; the leaf base is

not fleshy; old, fibrous leaf bases persist at the base of the plant. **Flower cluster** at the top of a leafless stalk with 1 - 6 branches. **Flowers** less than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (1 cm) across, with 6 stamens, a green ovary, and 6 white **tepals** (3 petals + 3 sepals), each with a green stripe on the underside. **Fruit** a flattened, 3-lobed capsule with 1 - 2 seeds per lobe.

Similar Species: Texas sunny-bells (*Schoenolirion wrightii*) occurs in Alabama and westward; it has fleshy leaf bases enclosing a bulb and white flowers in a narrow, unbranched cluster, with the flowers on short stalks. Yellow sunny-bells (*Schoenolirion croceum*) resembles Texas sunny-bells but has yellow flowers; it occurs mainly around Piedmont granite outcrops.

Related Rare Species: None in Georgia.

Habitat: Wet pine or cypress savannas.

Life History: White sunnybell is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually. Its flowers require cross-pollination to set fruit and produce seeds, and are visited by a variety of insects – bees, beetles, wasps, moths, and butterflies – but are most likely pollinated by solitary bees. The flowers reward pollinators with nectar. Unlike many plants in the lily family, including the two other *Schoenolirion* species, white sunnybells does not have a bulb. The upper, growing point of the rhizome, which produces the leaves and flower stalk, extends upward each year at the same time that the lower portion decays, thus maintaining an overall rhizome length of 2 - 3 inches (5 - 7.5 cm). Roots emerge from the top of the rhizome and are contractile, working like springs to pull the growing rhizome back underground and to anchor the plant in the soil.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (late May–early June).

Range: Georgia and Florida.

Threats: Conversion of habitat to pine plantations, pastures, and developments. Fire suppression, closure of canopy, and encroachment by woody plants.

Georgia Conservation Status: Two populations are known, although one has not been seen since the 1940s; both occur on private lands.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years. Avoid ditching, draining, and use of soil-compacting equipment in wetlands. Avoid plowing firebreaks through wetlands. Avoid conversion of wet pine flatwoods to pine plantations.

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Date Compiled or Updated:

L.Chafin, Aug. 2008: original account

D.Weiler, Jan. 2010: added pictures



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