



Common Name: FLATROCK FIMBRY

Scientific Name: *Fimbristylis brevivaginata* Kral

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Names: none

Family: Cyperaceae (sedge)

Rarity Ranks: G2/S2

State Legal Status: none

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial, tuft-forming **herb**, 8 - 20 inches (20 - 50 cm) tall, with a bulb-like base and underground stems (**rhizomes**) connecting to other tufts. **Leaves** grass-like, flat, less than 1/8 inch (1.5 - 2.5 mm) wide, erect or spreading, with rough-hairy margins; base of the leaf enclosed by a sheath bearing a line of hairs where the leaf emerges from the sheath. **Flower stalks** twice as long as the leaves, round near the base, flattened near the top. Flower cluster of 2 - 9 stalked **flower spikes** at the top of the stalk with several narrow, leaf-like bracts rising at the base of the cluster. **Flower spike** 1/4 - 1/2 inch (0.5 - 1.5 cm) long, oval or cylindrical, reddish-brown, composed of many small, oval, sharp-pointed scales that conceal flowers and fruits. **Fruit** a tiny, oval, ribbed “seed” with a pitted surface (10x magnification is required to see features of spike and fruit).

Similar Species: Most of the fimbry species that occur on granite outcrops (such as *Fimbristylis autumnalis*, *F. dichotoma*, and *F. annua*) are weedy, annual invaders of open, disturbed areas; none have the bulb-like base and rhizome of flatrock fimbry. *Fimbristylis puberula* is found occasionally on outcrops; it has a hardened, knotty, rather than bulbous, base and lacks rhizomes; its leaves are inrolled rather than flat, as with flatrock fimbry. Another similar appearing species, *F. caroliniana*, occurs only in coastal habitats or, occasionally, pine flatwoods in the Coastal Plain.

Related Rare Species: See Harper’s fimbry (*Fimbristylis perpusilla*) on this website.

Habitat: Sunny, wet areas on Georgia’s Piedmont granite outcrops, such as around pools or along wet cracks in the rock. In northeast Alabama, flatrock fimbry occurs on sandstone outcrops.

Life History: Flatrock fimbry is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually as well as by spread of underground rhizomes. Its flowers are wind-pollinated, and its seeds are likely dispersed by water seepage, birds, and other small animals.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during fruiting, summer–fall; fruits are important for identification. The bulb-like base is visible throughout the growing season.

Range: Georgia and northeastern Alabama

Threats: Flatrock fimbry is threatened by quarrying of granite outcrops, and by mulching, trash dumping, and off-road vehicle use on outcrops.

Georgia Conservation Status: Ten populations are known, only one on conservation lands.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Avoid quarrying of granite outcrops. Limit foot traffic on outcrops to unvegetated areas. Exclude vehicles from outcrops. Prevent trash dumping. Purchase and manage granite outcrops for conservation.

Selected References:

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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>

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Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Jan. 2008: original account

K. Owers, Jan 2010: added pictures



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