



SPECIAL PLANTS OF
NEW JERSEY

factsheet

American Chaffseed

Scientific Name: *Schwalbea americana*

State-listed: Endangered

Federally-listed: Endangered

State Conservation Rank: S1

Global Conservation Rank: G2

Description/Identification Tips: Erect, perennial herb in the figwort family (Scrophulariaceae). Stems unbranched, up to 80 cm tall and densely but minutely hairy. Leaves lance-shaped, untoothed, and clasping the stem. Flowers are singular on short stalks, tubular, large (15-22 mm long), and yellow-purple, with two small bracts.

Range: AL, FL, GA, LA, NC, NJ, SC (likely extirpated in CT, DE, KY, MA, MD, MS, NY, TN, VA).

Best Time to See: Blooms from June to mid-July in New Jersey.

Habitat: Acidic, sandy or peaty soils in open pine flatwoods, longleaf pine/oak sandhills, streamhead pocosins, pitch pine lowland forests, seepage bogs, palustrine pine savannahs, in ecotonal areas between peaty wetlands and xeric sandy soils.

Management: Populations benefit from specific mowing regimes and prescribed fire.

Needs: Protection from habitat conversion to residential and agricultural development, inappropriate mowing regimes, fire suppression, and over-collection.

Comments: New Jersey was once home to over a dozen populations of Chaffseed, but now there is only one known site, in the Pine Barrens. This site is the last known northeastern occurrence of the plant.

References: Johnson 1988; Center for Plant Conservation 2010; NatureServe 2010; USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database 2011.

— Ecological Interactions —

- * American Chaffseed is a hemiparasite, meaning that although it is photosynthetic, it is partially dependent on a host plant of another species for its nutrition requirements.
- * Chaffseed is pollinated by bees, which are attracted to its bilaterally symmetrical flowers.



NJ Natural Heritage
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Current and Historically
Documented Records