

WIREGRASS GENTIAN

Gentiana pennelliana Fern.

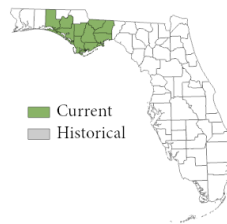
Synonyms: none

Family: Gentianaceae (gentian)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FACW+ FL-FACW



Gary Knight

Field Description: Perennial herb about 20 cm tall with weak herbaceous stems produced from a woody node or caudex. Leaves are opposite, widely spaced along the stem, linear elliptic, and 3- 4 cm long. The distinctive showy white tubular flowers about 7 cm long flare at the opening into 5 entire lobes alternating with 5 shorter fringed membranes.

Similar Species: The large, white tubular flowers in a wiregrass prairie habitat are distinctive.

Related Rare Species: Most other gentians in Florida are blue and none grow in wiregrass prairies.

Habitat: Open, wiregrass-dominated wet prairies, wet flatwoods, and slash pine plantations.

wiregrass gentian

Gentiana pennelliana

Best Survey Season: Winter-spring; November to December. Flowering strongly stimulated by fire in the current year.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to the panhandle of Florida.

Conservation Status: The primary threat is habitat loss due to fire suppression, degradation of the watershed, and conversion of pine flatwoods to slash pine plantations.

Protection and Management: This species prefers to grow with wiregrass ranging from very wet sites with pitcher plants to slightly drier slopes. Burn grassy flatwoods and prairies on a 2-3 year rotation with most fires performed during the early part of the growing season.

References: Kartesz 1993, Kral 1984 Wunderlin 1984, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.