

FLORIDA BLAZING STAR

Liatrix ohlingerae (Blake) B.L. Robins.

Synonyms: *Lacinaria ohlingerae* S.F. Blake;

Ammopursus ohlingerae (S.F. Blake) Small

Family: Asteraceae (composite)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-Endangered FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Gil Nelson



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Field Description: Perennial **herb** with erect, hairy **stems** to 3 feet tall. **Leaves** alternate, spirally arranged, fleshy and very narrow, 1 - 3 inches long (basal leaves up to 6 inches long are quickly shed). **Flower heads** 3 - 30 per plant, widely separated along the stem. **Flower heads** with involucre of rounded purplish bracts nearly 1 inch high, many purple **disk flowers**, each nearly 1 inch across (no ray flowers), and a **pappus** of white, finely-barbed bristles. Heads are larger than any other central Florida blazing star species.

Similar Species: Seven species of blazing star occur in Polk and Highlands counties; Florida blazing star is distinguished by its large flower heads, rounded involucre bracts, and narrow, fleshy leaves.

Related Rare Species: See Godfrey's blazing star (*Liatrix provincialis*) in this guide.

Florida blazing star

Liatris ohlingerae

Habitat: Rosemary balds, especially edges transitional to oak scrub; scrubby flatwoods and disturbed scrub.

Best Survey Season: Summer; June - September

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to the Lake Wales Ridge in Polk and Highlands counties, FL.

Conservation Status: More than 100 populations are known, about half of which are protected. Scrub habitat has been severely reduced and fragmented.

Protection and Management: Burn oak scrub every 15 - 20 years and rosemary scrub every 40 - 60 years. Protect sites from off-road-vehicles and trash dumping.

References: Coile 2000, Cronquist 1980, Dolan et al. 1999, Kral 1983, Herndon 1999, USFWS 1998, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.