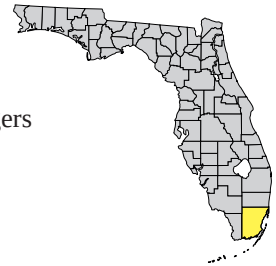
CARTER'S FLAX

Linum carteri Small
Synonyms: *Cathartolinum carteri* (Small) Small
Linum rigidum Pursh var. *carteri* (Small) C. M. Rogers
Family: Linaceae (flax)
FNAI Ranks: G2T1/S1
Legal Status: US–Candidate FL–Endangered
Wetland Status: US–FACW FL–FACW



Billy B. Boothe

Field Description: Annual **herb** 4 - 24 inches tall with smooth, narrowly wing-angled **stems**. **Leaves** 0.4 - 1.2 inches long, very narrow, alternate, often with a pair of small red glands at the base, upper leaves gland-toothed. **Flowers** about 0.5 inch wide, with 5 yellow-orange petals and 5 gland-toothed **sepals**; **style** undivided for almost entire length. **Fruit** a rounded capsule, opening into 5 segments; sepals shed by time of fruit maturity, not persisting at base of fruit.

Similar Species: All other species of *Linum* in Florida have distinctly 5-parted styles and fruits with persistent sepals (see drawing of sand flax, *Linum arenicola*). A south FL form of piriqueta (*Piriqueta caroliniana*, syn. *Piriqueta glabrescens*) has similar, but paler yellow flowers with hairy sepals and flower stalks; its leaves are narrow and alternate but lack the red glands.

Related Rare Species: Small's flax (*Linum carteri* var. *smallii*) lacks the red glands at base of the leaf. Also see in this guide West's flax (*Linum westii*) and sand flax (*Linum arenicola*).

Carter's flax *Linum carteri* var. *carteri*

Habitat: Carter's flax: pine rockland. Small's flax: pine rocklands, pine flatwoods, adjacent disturbed areas.

Best Survey Season: Flowers and fruits Feb–May, flowers opening in morning, shedding petals by mid-day.

Range-wide Distribution: Carter's flax: Endemic to Dade County. Small's flax: southern peninsular FL.

Conservation Status: Carter's flax: 9 known occurrences, 3 on conservation lands. Small's flax: 11 known occurrences, 6 on conservation lands.

Protection & Management: Purchase and protect remaining fragments of pine rockland. Re-establish plants in conservation areas. Apply prescribed fire every 3 - 7 years to create a mosaic of rockland habitats. Eradicate exotic pest plants.

References: Bradley and Gann 1999, Coile 2000, Godfrey and Wooten 1981, IRC 1999, Kral 1983, Robertson 1971, Rogers 1963, Rogers 1968, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.