

GENTIAN PINKROOT

Spigelia gentianoides Chapman ex A. DC.

Synonyms: none

Family: Loganiaceae (strychnine)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-Endangered FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



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Field Description: Perennial **herb** with 1 - 3 erect stems, 4 - 12 inches tall. **Leaves** opposite, in pairs at right angles to next set of leaves, without stalks, lowest leaves tiny and nearly round, midstem leaves oval to lance-shaped, 1 - 2 inches long. **Flowers** 0.5 - 1 inch long, erect in short, few-flowered spikes at the top of stems; pale pink with faint stripes, tubular with 5 triangular lobes usually closed over the opening (flower description applies to Florida plants only). **Fruit** with 2 conspicuous round lobes, surrounded by persistent, dried sepals.

Similar Species: Indian-pink (*Spigelia marilandica*) has similar leaves but is twice as tall, grows in clumps, and has bright red and yellow flowers. Many low herbs have opposite, oval leaves; note that gentian pinkroot is entirely hairless and has ridged stems, no leafstalks, and closed, tubular flowers.

Related Rare Species: See Florida pinkroot (*Spigelia loganioides*) in this guide.

gentian pinkroot

Spigelia gentianoides

Habitat: Upland pine and upland mixed woodland

Best Survey Season: Spring; May - June.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to FL Panhandle and 1 adjacent county in S AL. (Another variety, *Spigelia gentianoides* var. *alabamensis* occurs on dolomite outcrops in central AL.)

Conservation Status: As of 2021, seven populations are extant in Florida, five of which are protected on Conservation Lands. Three of the extant populations were discovered since 2007, two of which are on private property, indicating that more populations may be extant on lands managed for forestry through its range.

Protection and Management: Avoid logging and mechanical site preparation. Burn every 2 - 5 years. Monitor plants on public lands. Protect plants on private lands with conservation easements.

References: Allison 1996a, Allison and Stevens 2001, Coile 2000, Gould 1996, Kral 1983, Rogers 1988, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.



Flower close-up. © Robert Gundy