

GULF COAST SILVERY ASTER

Symphyotrichum concolor var. *devestitum* (L.)

Nesom

Synonyms: none

Family: Asteraceae (composite)

FNAI Ranks: G5T2/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-none

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-none



John Semple

Field Description:

Similar Species: The other variety of this species, eastern silver aster (*Symphyotrichum concolor* var. *concolor*), has leaves and phyllaries that are much more densely pubescent with silver hairs. Barrens silky aster (*Symphyotrichum pratense*) has 13-36 ray flowers per head.

Related Rare Species: Plumose aster (*Symphyotrichum plumosum*) is species endemic to Florida distinguished by its phyllaries which are spreading to recurved, long-acuminate, and with tangled hairs. Gulf coast silvery aster by contrast has appressed, acute phyllaries that are glabrous to sparsely pilose.

Habitat: This species occurs in oak scrub, sandhill, and upland longleaf flatwoods,

as well as on roadsides.

Best Survey Season: This species is most identifiable during flowering in the fall.

Range-wide Distribution: This species occurs in the Florida Panhandle and is recorded in nine counties there, as well as one southern county in Georgia. Although not specifically documented, it is possible that this species also occurs in Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

Conservation Status: This is an infrequently observed variety of a much more common, wide-ranging species. In Florida, this variety is restricted to the panhandle where only one-third of populations occur on conservation lands. Habitat loss and fragmentation have almost certainly occurred as a result of development and land conversion for silviculture. Insufficient fire frequency may also be a threat.

Protection and Management: Over 2/3 of known populations are not located within protected areas and are especially at risk of extirpation. Conservation opportunities in these areas through easements or acquisition should be pursued. The sandhill and oak scrub habitat that this species occupies should be prescribed burned or allowed to burn regularly.

References: FNA 2006, Semple 2004, Weakley 2020.