

**GAMOCHAETA IMPATIENS, SP. NOV. (ASTERACEAE: GNAPHALIEAE),  
THE USA ADVENTIVE  
PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED AS *G. COARCTATA***

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**ABSTRACT**

A morphometric analysis (Freire et al. 2021) found no consistent difference between South American plants identified as *Gamochaeta americana* (Mill. 1768) Wedd. and *Gamochaeta coarctata* (Willd. 1803) Kerg. Their observation is confirmed here through examination of general collections as well as the types (from Jamaica and Uruguay, respectively). The widespread and common species in the southeastern USA, however, which mostly has been identified as *G. coarctata*, is not the same as the South American species. Instead it appears to be an adventive from South America without formal taxonomic recognition — it is described here as ***Gamochaeta impatiens* Nesom, sp. nov.** Of the two, only *G. impatiens* occurs in the USA but *G. americana* and *G. impatiens* both are adventive in various parts of the world.

A morphometric analysis of 99 specimens (Freire et al. 2021) found no consistent difference between plants identified as *Gamochaeta americana* (Mill. 1768) Wedd. and *Gamochaeta coarctata* (Willd. 1803) Kerg. Their observation is confirmed here through examination of general collections at MO and TEX-LL (see box below). Nor do the type collections (from Jamaica and Uruguay, respectively, plus those of other possible synonyms, Figs. 20-22, 25, 27, 28-29; see comments with Fig. 28 regarding *G. irazuensis*; see caveat and comments regarding the type of *Gnaphalium americanum*, Figs. 20-22, 23-24) suggest that more than a single species is represented, *Gamochaeta americana* the correct name for it.

My first reaction to the Freire et al. conclusion, however, was of great surprise — having seen first-hand hundreds of populations of "*Gamochaeta coarctata*" in the southeastern USA and many of *Gamochaeta americana* in Mexico, and having seen hundreds of collections of both, there was never a doubt that two entities were present. The decisive point is that Freire et al. included essentially only South American plants (3 from outside, see box below), thus their conclusion should be read as "only a single species is represented in South America." Correspondingly, my concept of *G. coarctata* has been based on USA plants.

Locations of samples studied by Freire et al. (2021)

***Gamochaeta americana*** — Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Jamaica (*Houston s.n.*, lectotype, BM), Costa Rica (*Pruski 3878*, LP)

***Gamochaeta coarctata*** — Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Australia (Victoria, *Cameron 7592*, SI)

Collections studied first-hand for the present report

Mexico - 56 (MO), 84 (TEX-LL)  
Caribbean - 7 (MO), 14 (TEX-LL)  
Central America - 54 (MO), 25 (TEX-LL)  
South America - 115 (MO), 32 (TEX-LL)  
USA - hundreds from various herbaria

The Mexican plants clearly are *Gamochaeta americana* sensu Freire et al., which is continuously distributed from Mexico (Fig. 1) through Central America into South America. The widespread and common species in the southeastern USA (Fig. 2), however, which mostly has been identified as *G. coarctata* (e.g., Nesom 2006), differs in a number of features from the Mexican/Central American/South American species. There is no apparent match for it among species previously described from South America (or elsewhere) (e.g., Freire & Iharlegui 1997, 2014; Freire et al. 2016) — it appears to be adventive in the USA, almost certainly from a South America origin, and without formal taxonomic recognition — it is described here as a new species.

**GAMOCHAETA IMPATIENS** Nesom, sp. nov. TYPE: USA. Georgia. Grady Co.: 11 mi S of Thomasville, common on grassy roadsides, 1 May 1965, R.K. Godfrey 65713 (FSU, Fig. 42).

Similar to *Gamochaeta americana* but with stems decumbent-ascending to nearly prostrate (vs. erect) from the first, involucre shorter and rose-tinged, outer phyllaries depressed-ovate, bisexual florets fewer, and corolla apices reddish.

**Winter annuals or biennials**, fibrous-rooted. **Stems** decumbent-ascending to nearly prostrate, 15–35(–50) cm, white-pannose, the vestiture usually sheath-like, like polished cloth. **Leaves** basal and cauline, basal in persistent rosettes, blades spatulate to oblanceolate-obovate, (1.5–)3–8(–12) cm × 6–15(–22) mm, gradually or little smaller distally, slightly succulent, margins often crenulate on drying, faces bicolor, adaxial glabrous or rarely glabrate, usually shiny, abaxial closely white-pannose. **Heads** initially in a dense, continuous spiciform array 2–20 cm long, later (with elongation of the stems and axillary shoots) becoming branched and interrupted (see Figs. 35–42 for developmental sequence). **Involucre** cylindric-campanulate, 2.5–3 mm high. **Phyllaries** in 4–5 series, usually purplish or rosy, elliptic-obovate to broadly ovate-elliptic, lengths 1/3–1/4 inner, apices rounded to obtuse, inner oblong, laminae brown-hyaline, glabrous or the outermost sparsely villous at the very base, apices rounded to obtuse or blunt, inner apiculate. **Bisexual florets** 2–3. **Corollas** (bisexual and pistillate) reddish at the apex. **Cypselae** tan, 0.5–0.6 mm long.

Flowering (March–) April–June (–July). Ditches, roadsides, sidewalk cracks, shaded spots around buildings and other moist, ruderal habitats; 0–200 meters.

1. Stems decumbent-ascending to nearly prostrate from the first; distal 1/3 of the lamina of the inner phyllaries rosy to light reddish-brown hyaline, the whole involucre often with a distinctly purplish or rosy cast; involucre 2.5–3 mm high; outer phyllaries depressed-ovate, apex rounded, inner with rounded apex; bisexual florets 2–3; corolla apices reddish; leaves glabrous and shiny adaxially, the basal persistent ..... **Gamochaeta impatiens**

1. Stems first erect, sometimes becoming decumbent-ascending; distal half of the lamina of the inner phyllaries brown and sharply delimited in color from the proximal portion, the whole involucre often with a distinctly brownish cast; involucre 3–4 mm high; outer phyllaries ovate to oblong-lanceolate, apex mostly acute or acuminate, inner with acute apex; bisexual florets (2–)3–7; corolla apices yellow; leaves usually glabrescent adaxially, sometimes becoming shiny, the basal often not persistent ..... **Gamochaeta americana**

Freire et al. described the bisexual and pistillate florets of *Gamochaeta americana* as "purplish at apex, but I have not seen a single collection with such coloration (all instead are pale yellow to white). In my study, the consistently reddish color of *Gamochaeta impatiens* floret apices is diagnostic.

Leaves of *Gamochaeta americana* are characteristically strongly bicolored, with adaxial surfaces glabrous to glabrate, but in western Mexico (mostly Durango, Chihuahua, and Sonora), there is a tendency for the adaxial surfaces to be persistently hairy, sometimes resulting in a weakly bicolored appearance. Similar plants also appear sporadically in other parts of Mexico, and Dillon & Sagastegui (1991) noted that similar variation also occurs in South America.

*Gamochaeta impatiens* is without a doubt native to South America, the center of diversity and evolution of the genus. Its recent establishment and spread and its taxonomic recognition in the eastern USA are similar to *G. argyrinea* Nesom and *G. chionesthes* Nesom (Nesom 2004a), both of which are quickly spreading adventives in the USA, neither formally recognized from South America, both first described and typified from the USA. A preliminary phylogenetic analysis (Urtubey et al. 2016) suggests that *G. argyrinea* and *G. chionesthes* are more closely related to each other than either is to *G. americana/coarctata*. In any case, each of the three USA adventives noted here is unequivocally distinct in morphology.

*Gamochaeta americana* has been reported as an adventive species in many parts of the world (e.g., Freire et al. 2021), as has *G. coarctata*. Such records must be reexamined, as some are for *G. impatiens* — the following, for example.

**Gamochaeta impatiens. Swaziland.** Grahamstown Nature Reserve, short grass, in sand, 1900 ft, 20 Dec 1977, *Bayliss 8336* (MO); Howieson's Poort near Grahamstown, short grass, 1900 ft, 4 Jan 1978, *Bayliss 8442* (MO); Hhohho Dist., Masilela area, on Maphalaleni road along Mucucena Hills, SE of Masilela Peak near Ararat School, highland grassveld near huge granite outcrop, 1150 m, 27 Jan 1994, *Smook 8910* (MO). **New Zealand.** North Island, Waitemata Co., Mairangi Bay, Montrose Terrace, roadside, 8 Dec 1973, *Bangerter 5122* (MO); Auckland, Lonely Track Road, Albany, cleared areas of scrub, ca. 80 m, 20 Dec 1976, *Gardner 1389* (MO); North Island, Bay of Islands Co., Russell State Forest, ca. 4.5 km SE of Waikare, ca. 100 m, 30 Nov 1972, *Orchard 3758* (MO); Westland, 22 km S of Punakaiki, roadside, 6 Dec 1988, *Webb 468745* (MO).

The description of *Gamochaeta coarctata* in the Flora of China (Yousheng & Bayer 2011) places the species as *G. impatiens*: outer phyllaries "purplish or rosy, ... apices rounded to obtuse; ... inner phyllaries [with] apices rounded to obtuse of blunt; ... corollas of all florets usually purplish distally." "Naturalized in Guizhou and Taiwan."

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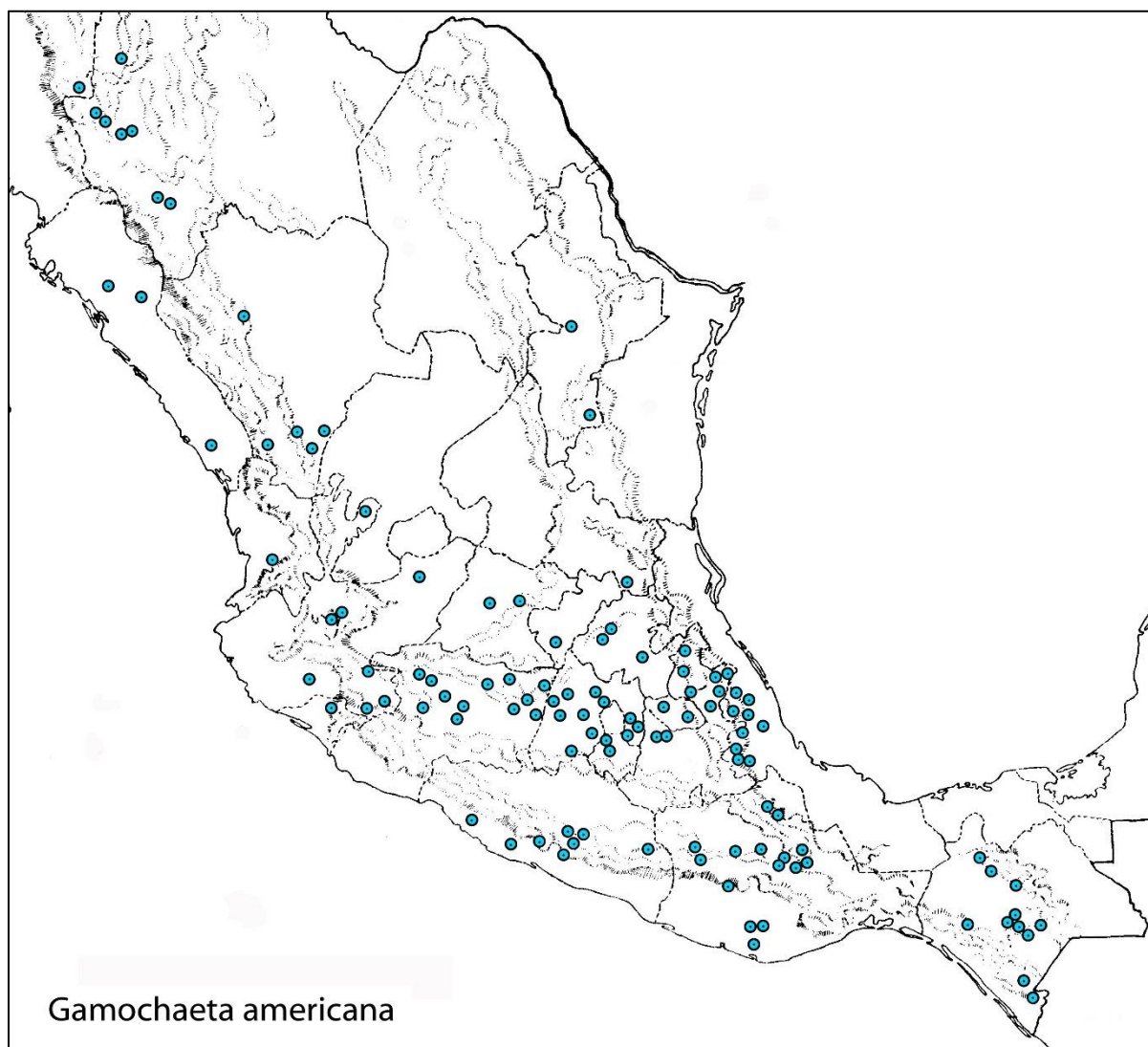


Figure 1. Distribution of *Gamochaeta americana* in Mexico. Records are mostly from ARIZ, MEXU, MO, TEX-LL, and US. The distribution continues through Central America into South America.

In Mexico, flowering all year. Pine, oak, and pine-oak woods, rain forest slopes, wet meadows, alpine meadows, rocky slopes, roadsides, cultivated areas; (750–)1100–3200(–3600) meters [(2450–)3600–10,500(–12,000) feet]. The range of habitats and elevations for *Gamochaeta americana* in Mexico is very different from that of *Gamochaeta impatiens* in the USA.

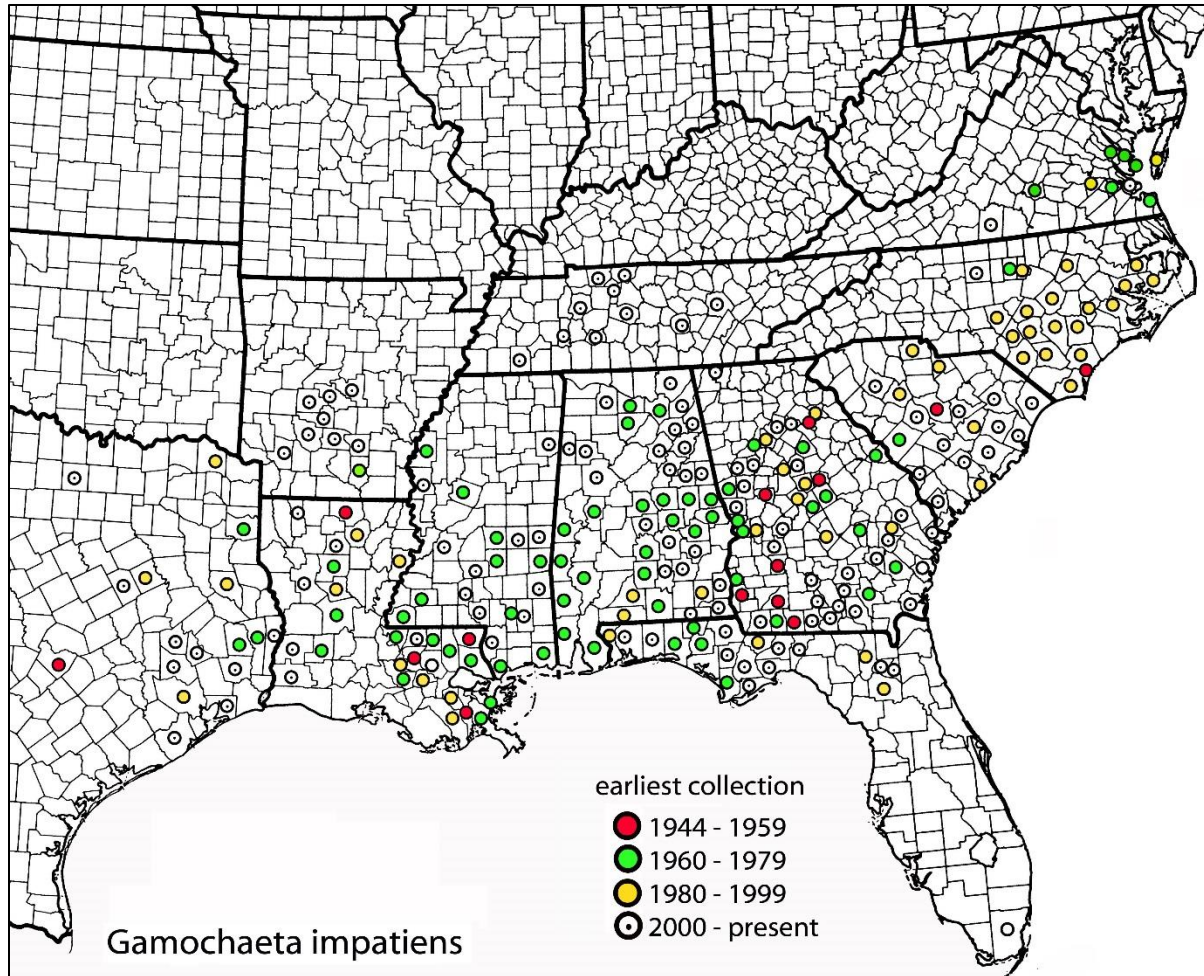


Figure 2. Distribution of *Gamochaeta impatiens* in the USA, showing earliest collection dates by county (see Appendix for data). Since its establishment in the 1940's, the species has become continuously distributed across 1200 miles of Gulf and Atlantic coastal plain and continues to move inland. It also has become naturalized in California (Nesom 2004b; CalFlora 2022).

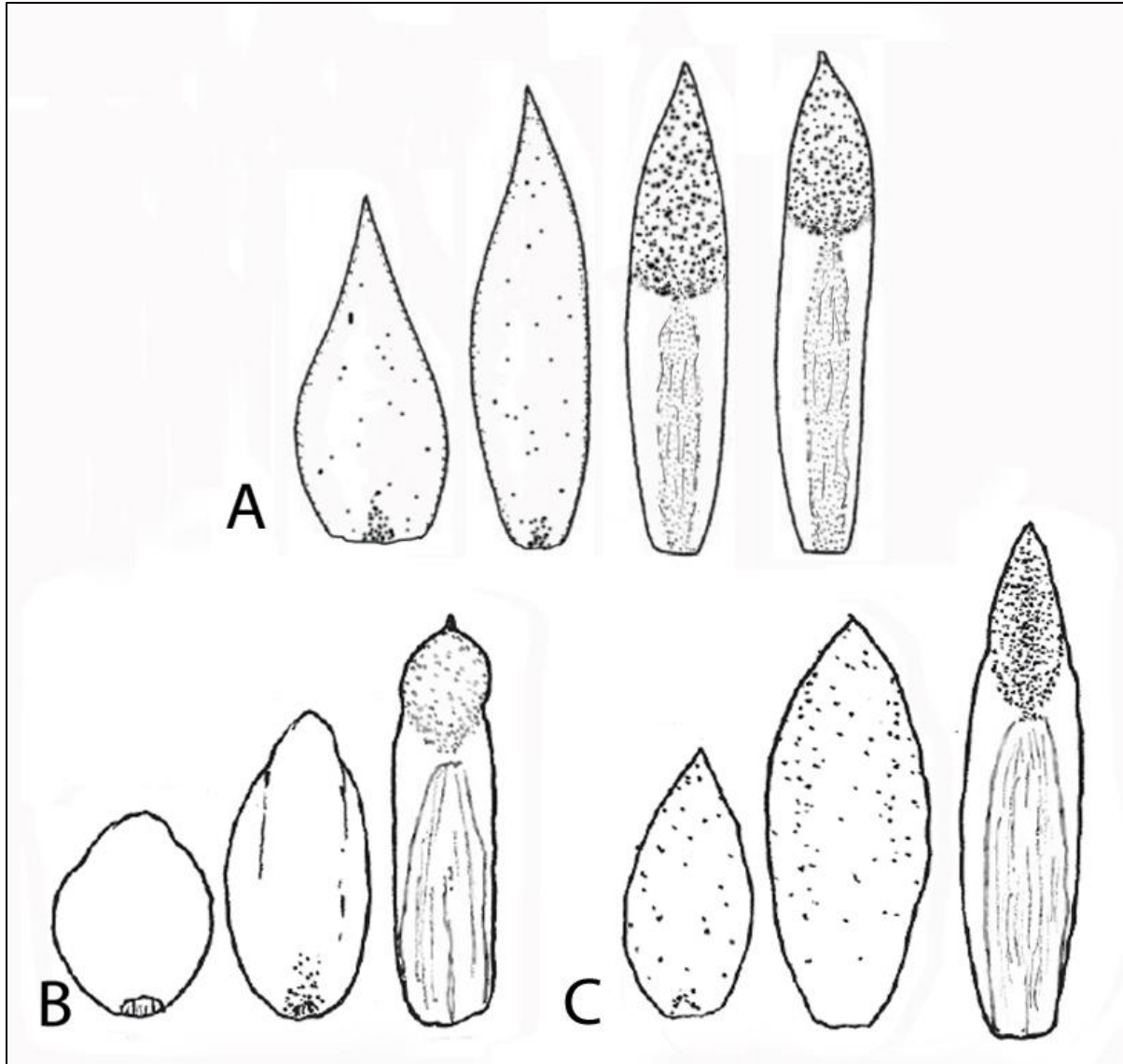


Figure 3. Phyllary outlines, outer (left) to inner (right). A. *Gamochaeta americana* (adapted from Freire et al. 2021, Fig. 4D). B. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. C. *Gamochaeta americana*. B and C from Nesom 2004.



Figure 4. *Gamochoeta americana*. Hidalgo, Mexico (MO).



Figure 5. *Gamochoeta americana*. Hidalgo, Mexico (MO).





Figure 6. *Gamochaeta americana*. Hidalgo, Mexico (MO).



Figure 7. *Gamochaeta americana*. Hidalgo, Mexico (MO).



Figure 8. *Gamochaeta americana*. Oaxaca, Mexico. iNaturalist photo by Eugenio Padilla (eugenio\_padilla), 15 November 2020.



Figure 9. *Gamochaeta americana*. Chiapas, Mexico. iNaturalist photo by Diego Manzano Méndez (diegoman), 23 May 2020



Figure 10. *Gamochaeta americana*. Michoacan, Mexico. iNaturalist photo by Ricardo Arredondo T. (elrayman210), 19 February 2019.



Figure 11. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina. iNaturalist photo by Margarita Lankford (mlankford), 20 April 2020.



Figure 12. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Mobile Co., Alabama. iNaturalist photo by Howard Horne (howardhorne), 13 April 2018.



Figure 13. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. San Diego Co., California. iNaturalist photo by "snakeinmypocket." May 2020.





Figure 14. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Alabama, USA (MO).



Figure 15. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Alabama, USA (MO).



Figure 16. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Alabama, USA (MO).



Figure 17. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Alabama, USA (MO).



Figure 18. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Alabama, USA (MO).



Figure 19. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Alabama, USA (MO).

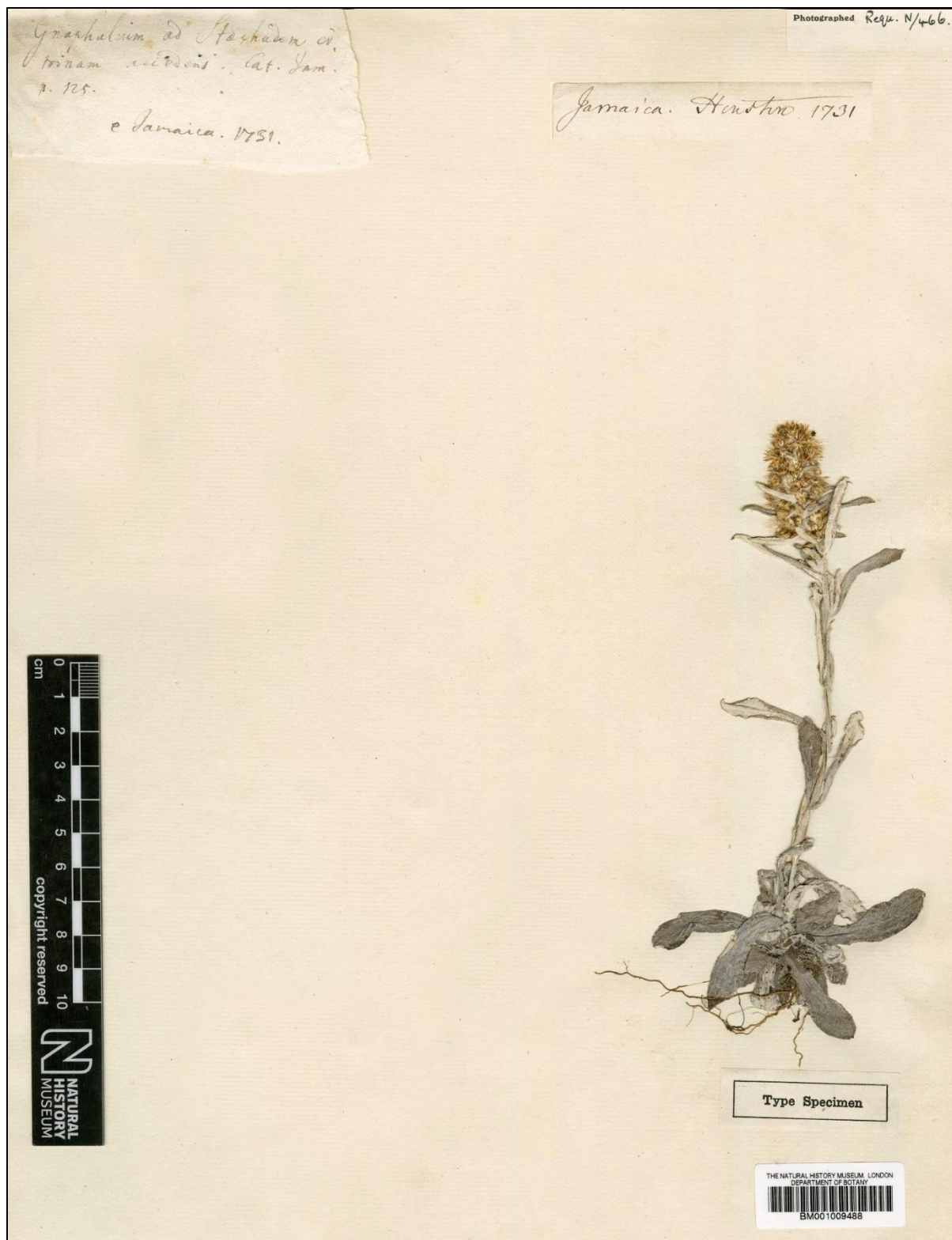


Figure 20. *Gnaphalium americanum*. Jamaica. Lectotype, *Houston s.n.* (BM). The gray adaxial leaf surfaces of the type are not characteristic of the species, but other plants from Jamaica have typical morphology (see Figs. 23 and 24).



Figure 21. *Gnaphalium americanum*. Closer view of the lectotype.





Figure 22. *Gnaphalium americanum*. Detail from the lectotype (BM).



Figure 23. *Gnaphalium americanum*. Jamaica. Anderson & Sternberg 3479 (US).

Figure 24. *Gnaphalium americanum*. Jamaica. Liogier 12851 (US).



Figure 25. *Gnaphalium coarctatum*. Montevideo, Uruguay. Holotype, *Commerson s.n.* (P-LAM). This is the holotype of *Gnaphalium spicatum* Lam. (1788), an illegitimate homonym, not P. Miller 1768. *Gnaphalium coarctatum* Willd. was proposed by Willdenow in 1803 as a substitute name for *G. spicatum* (see Pruski & Nesom 2004).



Figure 26. *Gnaphalium coarctatum*. Detail from the holotype.



Figure 27. *Gnaphalium consanguineum* Gaudichaud (1825). Falkland Islands. Lectotype, Gaudichaud s.n. (P). Listed by Freire et al. as a synonym of *Gamochaeta americana*.



Figure 28. *Gamochoaeta irazuensis* Nesom (1990). Costa Rica. Holotype, Allen 702 (F).



Figure 29. *Gamochaeta irazuensis*. Details from the holotype. These are plants from the Cordillera de Talamanca region of Costa Rica, strongly perennial with dense, silvery-white vestiture on abaxial leaf surfaces and with sheath-like cauline vestiture. The name was included without comment as a synonym of *G. americana* by Freire et al. (2021).





UNITED STATES  
087336  
NATIONAL HERBARIUM

MEXICAN FLORA.  
STATE OF JALISCO,  
Coll. Dr. Edward Palmer, 1886.  
No. 219.

GUADALAJARA, July—October.

00854362

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HERBARIUM (L.L. TEX.)  
*Gamochaeta americana* (Mill.) Wedd.  
Det. Guy Nesom, 1991

77005 fl. det. as ↓

7219  
HERB. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.  
 *Gnaphalium purpuraceum*, Linn.  
Locality: Mexico  
Collector: Dr. E. Palmer 1886.



Figure 31. *Gamochoaeta americana*. Mexico, Schneé s.n. (US).



Figure 32. *Gamochaeta americana*. Chiapas, Mexico, Breedlove 8908 (US).



Figure 33. *Gamochaeta americana*. Jalisco, Mexico, McVaugh 10328 (US).



Figure 34. *Gamochaeta americana*. Edo. México, Mexico, Matuda 28242 (MEXU).



Figure 35. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Gwinnett Co., Georgia. Zomlefer 1506 (GA). Early inflorescence.



Figure 36. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Upson Co., Georgia. Godfrey 58428 (FLAS). Early inflorescence.



Figure 37. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Dale Co., Alabama. *Diamond 15176* (AUA). Early inflorescence.





Figure 38. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Lee Co., Georgia. Godfrey 58441 (FLAS). Early inflorescence.

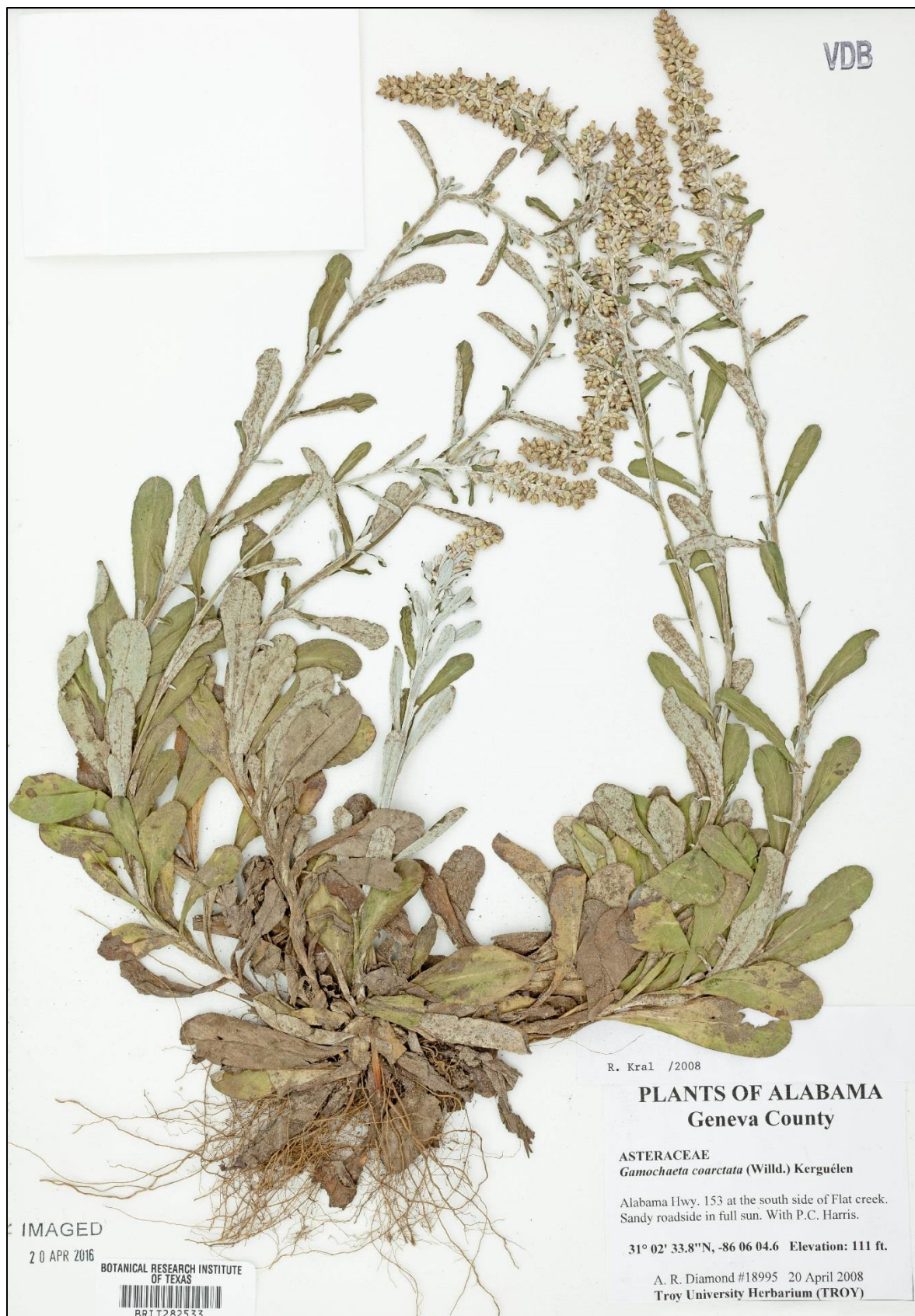


Figure 39. *Gamochoeta impatiens*. Geneva Co., Alabama. *Diamond 18995* (VDB). Mid inflorescence.



Figure 40. *Gamochoeta impatiens*. Sumter Co., Alabama. Kral 23811 (VDB). Mid inflorescence.



Figure 41. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Clinch Co., Georgia. Carter 20822 (GA). Late inflorescence.



Figure 42. *Gamochaeta impatiens*. Grady Co., Georgia. Holotype, Godfrey 65713 (FSU). Late inflorescence, after elongation of primary stems and lateral branches.

**Appendix. GAMOCHAETA IMPATIENS — DATES OF FIRST COLLECTIONS, BY STATE AND COUNTY****Alabama**

Autauga 2017  
 Baldwin 1971  
 Blount 2013  
 Bullock 2008  
 Butler 1966  
 Chambers 1967  
 Chilton 1976  
 Choctaw 1966  
 Clarke 1971  
 Conecuh 1985  
 Coosa 1974  
 Covington 1970  
 Crenshaw 2006  
 Cullman 1975  
 Dale 1997  
 DeKalb 2008  
 Elmore 1975  
 Escambia 1995  
 Fayette 2008  
 Geneva 1959  
 Hale 1966  
 Henry 2008  
 Houston 1972  
 Lamar 2010  
 Lawrence 2013  
 Lee 1969  
 Lowndes 1975  
 Macon 1967  
 Marshall 1966  
 Mobile 1972  
 Montgomery 2009  
 Morgan 1974  
 Pike 2006  
 Randolph 1975  
 Russell 1959  
 Saint Clair 2003  
 Sumter 1965  
 Talladega 2006  
 Tallapoosa 1976  
 Tuscaloosa 1958  
 Washington 1975

**Arkansas**

Bradley 1976  
 Clark 2005  
 Cleveland 1991  
 Dallas 2005  
 Garland 2007

Hempstead 2010  
 Hot Spring 1973  
 Pulaski 2007  
 Saline 2007

**Florida**

Alachua 1988  
 Bradford 2012  
 Calhoun 2014  
 Columbia 1990  
 Escambia 1957  
 Gadsden 1983  
 Gulf 1966  
 Holmes 1967  
 Jackson 1958  
 Leon 1948  
 Miami-Dade 1977  
 Okaloosa 2002  
 Santa Rosa 1996  
 Union 2012  
 Walton 1967  
 Washington 1967

**Georgia**

Appling 2006  
 Atkinson 2013  
 Baldwin 1956  
 Barrow 2012  
 Bibb 1991  
 Brooks 2013  
 Butts 1987  
 Camden 2006  
 Catoosa 2012  
 Chattahoochee 1969  
 Clarke 1947  
 Clay 1978  
 Clinch 2013  
 Cook 2005  
 DeKalb 1995  
 Dodge 1981  
 Early 1959  
 Evans 1992  
 Fayette 2010  
 Fulton 1964  
 Grady 1965  
 Gwinnett 2007  
 Harris 2013  
 Jasper 2013  
 Jones 1981

Lanier 2013  
 Lee 1959  
 Lowndes 2010  
 Lumpkin 2001  
 Macon 2013  
 Madison 1980  
 Marion 1980  
 McIntosh 2017  
 Meriwether 2013  
 Mitchell 1959  
 Montgomery 1976  
 Morgan 1968  
 Muscogee 1965  
 Richmond 1977  
 Sumter 2013  
 Talbot 2013  
 Thomas 1959  
 Tift 2009  
 Troup 1970  
 Twiggs 1967  
 Upson 1959  
 Ware 1966  
 Wayne 1975  
 Wilkinson 1968

**Louisiana**

Ascension 1995  
 Beauregard 2007  
 Calcasieu 2015  
 East Baton Rouge 1958  
 Grant 1995  
 Iberville 1973  
 Jefferson Davis 1973  
 Jefferson 1948  
 LaFourche 1988  
 Livingston 1970  
 Ouachita 1984  
 Plaquemines 1960  
 Rapides 1977  
 St. Bernard 1973  
 St. Charles 1980  
 St. Helena 1970  
 St. Tammany 1976  
 Tangipahoa 1963  
 Tensas 1981  
 Union 1959  
 Washington 1933  
 Webster 1978  
 West Baton Rouge 1992  
 West Feliciana 1973  
 Winn 1976

**Mississippi**

Bolivar 1960  
 Clarke 1968  
 Forrest 1967  
 Franklin 1968  
 Hancock 1973  
 Hinds 1997  
 Holmes 1967  
 Jackson 1975  
 Marion 2012  
 Monroe 1997  
 Pearl River 1995  
 Scott 1968  
 Simpson 2012  
 Smith 1967  
 Wayne 2014  
 Wilkinson 1968

**North Carolina**

Beaufort 1996  
 Bladen 1992  
 Brunswick 1988  
 Craven 1994  
 Cumberland 1988  
 Duplin 1989  
 Durham 1988  
 Guilford 2010  
 Harnett 1989  
 Hoke 1990  
 Hyde 1996  
 Johnston 1990  
 Lenoir 1992  
 Moore 1987  
 New Hanover 1949  
 Orange 1977  
 Pender 1989  
 Robeson 1995  
 Sampson 1990  
 Washington 1996

**South Carolina**

Aiken 1962  
 Allendale 2017  
 Beaufort 2006  
 Calhoun 2009  
 Charleston 1992  
 Clarendon 1989  
 Colleton 2017  
 Dillon 2015  
 Georgetown 2018  
 Lancaster 1989

Laurens 2017  
Lee 2020  
Lexington 2000  
McCormick 2016  
Newberry 1990  
Oconee 2013  
Orangeburg 2001  
Richland 1958  
Spartanburg 2012  
Sumter 2007  
Union 2016  
York 1993

**Tennessee**

Bedford 2013  
Cheatham 2020  
Cumberland 2021  
Decatur 2018  
Hardeman 2017  
Humphreys 2021  
Lewis 2020  
Montgomery 2019  
Robertson 2021  
Warren 2018  
Williamson 2021

**Texas**

Brazoria 2005  
Chambers 2005  
Freestone 1995  
Hardin 2004  
Harris 1994  
Harrison 1975  
Jasper 1978  
Montgomery 2004  
Nacogdoches 1992  
Newton 2007  
Red River 1993  
San Jacinto 2002  
Travis 1944  
Tyler 1969  
Walker 2004  
Wise 2004

**Virginia**

Hampton 1969  
King & Queen 1977  
Mathews 1977  
Middlesex 1977  
Newport News 2014  
Northampton 1996  
Pittsylvania 2012  
Prince Edward 1967  
Prince George 1994  
Surry 1973  
Virginia Beach City 1962