

CURTISS' MILKWEED

Asclepias curtissii Gray

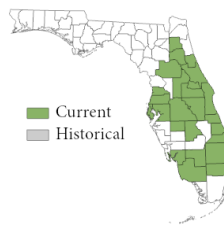
Synonyms: none

Family: Apocynaceae (dogbane)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



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Field Description: Erect to decumbent perennial milkweed growing on dry white sand areas. Stems are densely clothed with broad, oblong, wavy-edged, opposite leaves and topped by one to three rounded dense umbels of flowers with pale pinkish-white hoods and pale green reflexed petals.

Similar Species: Most similar in overall appearance to pineland milkweed (*Asclepias obovata*) and velvet leaf milkweed (*A. tomentosa*), which also occur in dry sandy sites within its range. Differs from these species in having inflorescences borne on long stems (rather than being sessile on the main stem).

Related Rare Species: Southern milkweed (*Asclepias viridula*), state-threatened, is found in northern FL.

Habitat: Found in oak scrub, sand pine scrub, and scrubby flatwoods, usually in open sand; plants often widely scattered on any given site. Most often found along

Curtiss' milkweed

Asclepias curtissii

sand roads where there has been some soil disturbance, rather than back in among other vegetation (Minno 1991).

Best Survey Season: Spring-fall; June -September

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Florida in scrubs from Clay County south to Collier and Broward counties.

Conservation Status: Listed state-endangered and tracked as vulnerable, this species is vouchered from 21 counties along the Florida peninsula.

Protection and Management: In one study plants were found to re-sprout after fire but in lower numbers than before the fire (Weekley and Menges 2003). However, planted specimens also do not appear every year but may stay dormant in some years which may account for the low numbers following fire. Planted specimens have lived over 25 years (Minno 1991). Flowers are pollinated by skipper and hairstreak butterflies and have low seed production relative to other milkweeds (Minno 1991).

References: Minno, M. 1991. The natural history and ecology of *Asclepias curtissii* Gray (Apocynaceae), a rare scrub endemic from Florida. Master Thesis, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Weekley, C.W., and E.S. Menges. 2003. Species and vegetation responses to prescribed fire in a long-unburned, endemic-rich