SOUTHERN MILKWEED
Asclepias viridula Chapman
Synonyms: none
Family: Apocynaceae (dogbane)
FNAI Ranks: G2/S2
Legal Status: US-none; FL-none


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Field Description: Perennial **herb** from a thickened **rootstock**. **Stems** erect, slender, purplish at base, smooth except for a line of small hairs between leaf nodes. **Leaves** 5 - 10 cm long, smooth, opposite, very narrow, slightly widened near tip, 10 - 20 pairs per stem. **Flowers** 6 - 10, in flat-topped clusters on stalks in the angle between upper leaves and stem; pale green with maroon tint; petals curved sharply downward; **corona** consists of incurving horns and erect, unlobed hoods that cover the stigma. **Fruit** an elongated pod, erect, smooth, up to 10 cm long. All parts of the plant with milky sap.

Similar Species: Carolina milkweed (*Asclepias cinerea*) lacks the line of stem hairs; it has lavender flowers with lobed hoods shorter than and not covering the stigma. Michaux's milkweed (*Asclepias michauxii*) has hairy stems; pale green flowers in a cluster on main or side branches with hoods covering the stigma but no horns; leaves are alternate or subopposite.

Southern milkweed ***Asclepias viridula***

Related Rare Species: Curtiss' milkweed (*Asclepias curtissii*), state-endangered, is found in scrub and sandhill in central peninsular FL.

Habitat: Wet flatwoods, prairies, seepage slopes, and pitcherplant bogs.

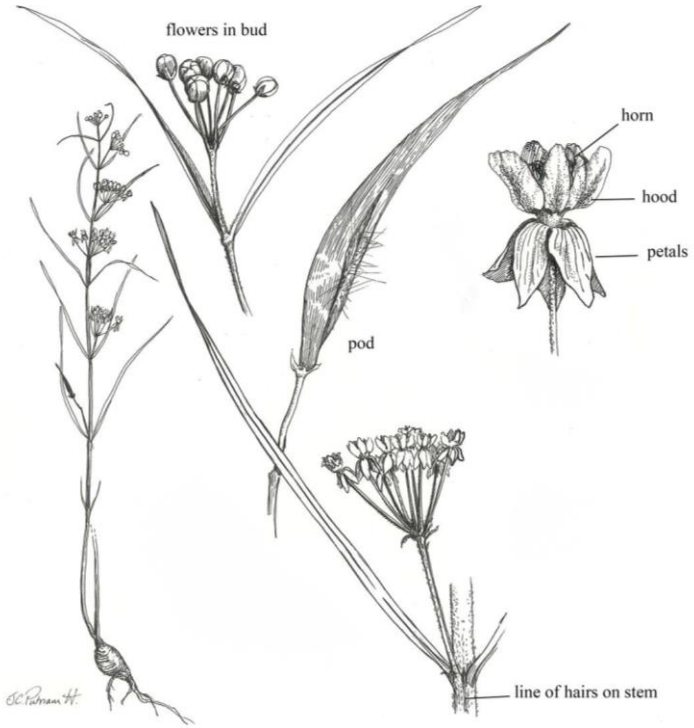
Best Survey Season: Spring-summer; April - July following fire, otherwise very difficult to see.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to FL Panhandle and NE FL.

Conservation Status: Southern milkweed was once more widespread in northern FL, but is now mainly found in the Apalachicola National Forest, where about 30 populations are protected.

Protection and Management: Avoid disruptions to soil and hydrology, such as bedding, chopping, and pine planting. Burn every 2 - 3 years.

References: Clewell 1985, Coile 1999, Coile 2000, Godfrey and Wooten 1981, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.



Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 2000