

## SAND BUTTERFLY PEA

*Centrosema arenicola* (Small) F.J. Herm.

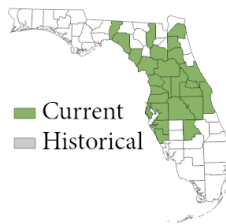
**Synonyms:** *Bradburya arenicola* Small;

*Centrosema floridanum* (Britton) Lakela

**Family:** Fabaceae (pea)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2Q/S2

**Legal Status:** US-none; FL-none



Flower violet in color with white spot in center. Restoration sandhill at Aucilla Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

**Field Description:** Perennial **vine** with **stems** up to 3 m long twining over bushes. **Leaves** with 3 oval or lance-shaped **leaflets** to 5 cm long, dark green, somewhat leathery. **Flowers** 3.8 cm wide, purplish-blue (rarely pink or white), twisted so that large, notched banner petal is lowest. **Calyx** with 4 triangular lobes, the lower lobe forked, the upper lobes much shorter than the lower. Two small **bracts** beneath the flower partially hide the calyx. **Fruit** a flattened pod, 12.2 cm long, linear, with a long curving beak.

**Similar Species:** Spurred butterfly pea (*Centrosema virginianum* var. *virginianum*) stems are less than 1.5 m long; leaflets are longer (to 7.1 cm), narrow, and linear; lighter green, not leathery; calyx lobes are all narrowly pointed and about the same size.

## sand butterfly pea

*Centrosema arenicola*

**Related Rare Species:** Scrub pigeon-wing (*Clitoria fragrans*) is a similar rare species in the legume family. Scrub pigeon-wing is an erect herb, not a vine; its flowers are similar to sand butterfly pea flowers, but the banner petal is not notched; pods lack the long beak; and bracts at the base of the flower are tiny, not covering the calyx.

**Habitat:** Sandhill, scrubby flatwoods, and dry upland woods.

**Best Survey Season:** Summer-fall; June - October. Each flower lasts only one day.

**Range-wide Distribution:** North FL (Columbia, Dixie, and Duval counties) south to South-central FL.

**Conservation Status:** Over half of the 38 known populations occur on protected land but populations on private land are subject to continuing threats of land development, conversion to agriculture, fire exclusion, silviculture, and recreational activities.

**Protection and Management:** Purchase and protect sandhill, scrubby flatwoods, scrub and other dry upland habitats. Maintain these habitats with the appropriate fire return interval (sandhill 1-3 years, scrubby flatwoods 5-15 years, scrub 5-20 years) .

**References:** Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.



Plant a vine with leaflets 3-foliolate. Restoration sandhill at Aucilla Wildlife

Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Upper forked calyx lobe 3 - 4 mm long. Scrubby flatwoods at Spring Creek Unit of Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Growing in restoration sandhill at Aucilla Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

