

## SCRUB PIGEON-WING

*Clitoria fragrans* Small

**Synonyms:** *Martusia fragrans* (Small) Small

**Family:** Fabaceae (pea)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2G3/S2S3

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



Erect or ascending herb, 20 - 60 cm tall. Fruit on a long stalk 15 - 20 mm long.

Photo © Scott Ward.

**Field Description:** Perennial **herb** 20 - 60 cm tall, with erect, purplish, waxy **stems**. **Leaves** alternate, with 3 leathery **leaflets**, 2 - 5 cm long, narrowly oblong, leaflet tip obtuse with a minute bristle, upper surface dark green with conspicuous veins, lower surface pale green and waxy. **Flowers** showy, fragrant; 2 short wing petals curve forward, almost covering 2 keel petals; banner petal almost 5 cm long, pink to lavender-blue with purplish veins and large white spot; flowers twisted on their stalks so that the banner petal is lowest. **Fruit** a pod, 2.5 - 5 cm long on 15 - 20 mm stalk, waxy, flattened, depressed between the seeds.

**Similar Species:** Pigeon-wing (*Clitoria mariana*) has similar flowers, but is a trailing vine with tendrils and oval or lance-shaped leaves.

**Related Rare Species:** Sand butterfly pea (*Centrosema arenicola*) has similar flowers, but it is a trailing vine, leaflets are ovate with a papery texture, and the lower banner petal is notched.

## scrub pigeon-wing

*Clitoria fragrans*

**Habitat:** Turkey oak barrens with wiregrass, bluejack and turkey oak; also scrub, sandhills, and dry roadsides.

**Best Survey Season:** Early summer; May - June.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Endemic to Central Florida, occurring mostly along the Lake Wales Ridge. From Marion County south through Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk and Highlands counties.

**Conservation Status:** Scrub pigeon-wing occurs in undisturbed clearings of xeric sandhill and scrub communities. Scrub habitat within Florida has decreased by more than 80 percent, affecting numerous rare plant species in central Florida, and this species has likely suffered declines due to this conversion of scrub habitat. However, about 70 percent of remaining occurrences are on Conservation Lands, though they are still subject to the threats of fire exclusion and forestry management practices (e.g. firebreaks). The remaining occurrences are on private land where they are subject to continuing threats of land development, conversion to agriculture (i.e., citrus), fire exclusion, and recreational activities.

**Protection and Management:** Apply prescribed fire to scrub and turkey oak barrens to create a mosaic of habitats. Purchase and protect private sites. Prevent vehicle access to sites.

**References:** Coile 2000, Fantz 1977, Isely 1990, Kral 1983, Small 1926c, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.



Flower purple in full bloom during march blooming season. Photo © Billy B. Boothe.



Leaflet 3-foliate; leaflet 3.0 - 4.5 times as long as wide, obtuse at the tip. Photo © Scott Ward.

