

## LAKELA'S BALM

*Dicerandra immaculata* var. *immaculata*

Lakela

**Synonyms:** *Dicerandra frutescens* Shinners

var. *immaculata* (Lakela) D.B. Ward

**Family:** Lamiaceae (mint)

**FNAI Ranks:** G1T1/S1

**Legal Status:** US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



Flower without spots; stems erect. Photo © Scott Ward.

**Field Description:** Low erect **shrub**, stems to about 0.5 m tall, square with low ridges on the angles, bushy, forming mats or sprawling hummocks. The stems not decumbent or rooting at the nodes. **Leaves** to 1.8 cm long, opposite, narrowly lanceolate with rounded tips and inrolled margins, covered with glands. **Flowers** 1 - 3 per whorl, in leaf axils, less than 2 cm long, rose-pink with no spots or lines; 2-lipped with rounded lobes; tube smoothly curved, not sharply bent; stamens extend beyond the flower, anthers with tiny spurs. Stems and leaves have a strong mint odor.

**Similar Species:** Florida balm (*Dicerandra densiflora*) and coastalplain balm (*Dicerandra linearifolia* var. *robustior*), both occur in longleaf pine sandhills in central Florida and are herbaceous annuals, rather than woody perennials.

**Related Rare Species:** All central FL species of balm (*Dicerandra*) are rare. Scrub mint (*Dicerandra frutescens*), federal and state-endangered, resembles Lakela's balm vegetatively, but the flowers are cream, white, or pale pink with purple lines and dots and purple anthers; the tube is sharply bent. Savanna balm (*Dicerandra immaculata* var. *savannarum*), which has decumbent stems that root at the nodes, compared to Lakela's balm which has erect stems that do not root at the nodes. Additionally, leaves of Savannas balm are larger, on average about 2.5 cm long by 1 cm wide, compared to Lakela's balm whose leaves are on average about 1.8 cm long and 0.3 cm wide. Both the longspurred mint (*Dicerandra cornutissima*) and the Titusville balm (*Dicerandra thinicola*) have spots on their flowers. Additionally, their geographical ranges do not overlap with this species. Garrett's mint (*D. christmanii*) occurs in central Florida inland and has white-cream colored flowers.

**Habitat:** Scrub, on paths and disturbed areas.

**Best Survey Season:** Early to mid fall; primarily October - November, sporadically all year.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Lakela's mint is endemic to just three counties on Florida's Atlantic coast: Indian River, St. Lucie, and Martin counties.

**Conservation Status:** Lakela's mint is known from a single native population scattered across several sites, a mixture of protected and unprotected areas. Three additional populations have been introduced into protected and managed areas. However, lack of fire, invasive plant species, and seed predation all threaten the persistence of these populations.

**Protection and Management:** Purchase and protect privately owned sites. Control foot and off-road-vehicle traffic. Eradicate exotic pest plants. Use occasional fire to open up habitat.

**References:** Coile 2000, Eisner et al. 1990, Huck 1987, Kral 1982, Menges 1992, USFWS 1986b, USFWS 1998, USFWS 2021, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

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