CARIBBEAN CRABGRASS
Digitaria dolichophylla Henr.
Synonyms: *Digitaria filiformis* (L.) Koel. var. *dolichophylla* (J. Henrard) J. Wipff
Family: Poaceae (grass)
FNAI Ranks: G5T5/S2
Legal Status: US-none FL-Threatened
Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL

Photo by Keith Bradley

Field Description: Inflorescences panicles of spikelike branches; secondary branches rarely present; **leaf blades** 1 mm wide or less, involute; **spikelets** appressed to branches, in groups of 2-5 on the middle portion of the primary branches. **Spikelets** with glandular capitate trichomes, 1.3-2.1 or 2.1-5.2mm long (keys both ways); second glume 1.2-1.4mm long (Wunderlin and Hansen 2011). **Rachis** essentially wingless, racemes few; **spikelets** short pubescent with hairs of sterile lemmas capitellate; **spikelets** 1.5mm long; **blades** involute and flexuous (Long and Lakela 1971).

Similar Species: Slender crabgrass (*Digitaria filiformis var. filiformis*) is very similar but, according to Wunderlin and Hansen (2011), has leaves that are flat and >1mm wide. Slender crabgrass also occurs across almost all of Florida, while Caribbean crabgrass (*D. filiformis var. dolichophylla*) is limited to pine rocklands,

mainly on the Miami Rock Ridge and the Keys.

Related Rare Species: There are several species in this genus occurring in Florida that are very rare, including: *Digitaria subcalva* which is endemic to Highlands, Polk, and Hillsborough counties, *D. simpsonii*, endemic to central peninsular Florida; *D pauciflora,* endemic to south Florida; and *D. leucocoma*, endemic to Lake County.

Habitat: Pine rocklands.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: South Florida, mainly on the Miami Rock Ridge, and the Keys.

Conservation Status: The element occurs in pine rocklands within a highly fragmented landscape. It is currently known from 26 different conservation areas. No information is known concerning the number of individuals within these populations and thorough surveys are needed to address this data gap.

Protection and Management: Appropriate fire management of pine rocklands, removal of invasive exotic species, and thorough surveys for the element will contribute toward persistence of the species.

References: Long, R. W. & O. Lakela. 1971, Weakley 2020, Wunderlin and Hansen, 2011