

PLANT CITY CRABGRASS

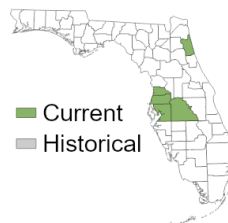
Digitaria subcalva A.S. Hitchcock

Synonyms: none

Family: Poaceae (grass)

FNAI Ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-none



No Image
Available

Field Description: Stoloniferous perennial **grass**, forming large tufts (to one meter in diameter) from creeping stolons, with ascending fertile **culms** 30 - 60 cm tall. **Leaf sheaths** densely papillose-pilose, **ligule** 2 mm long, leaf blades flat, densely pilose, 3 - 15 cm long, 1 - 5 mm wide, spreading to slightly ascending. **Inflorescence** long-exserted from the leafy part of the **culm**, consisting of 2 - 4 primary spike-like branches, each (7-) 10 - 12 (-13) cm long, relatively slender and delicate, devoid of spikelets (naked) for the lower 2 - 4 cm of the inflorescence rachis, with most naked for 3.0 - 3.5 cm. **Spikelets** rather remotely spaced on the primary branches, such that there is very little (0.2 mm or less) overlap between the apex of one spikelet and the base of the next proximal spikelet, thus the spikelets appearing to be in a single rank. **Spikelets** paired, the lower of each pair with a pedicel ca. 0.5 mm long, the upper of each pair with a pedicel 2.5 - 3.0 mm long. **Spikelets** 2.4 - 2.8 mm long; lower glume absent; upper glume glume 5 - 7 nerved, glabrous to sparsely villous; lower lemma 5 - 7 nerved, the margins somewhat villous; both upper glume and lower lemma sometimes suffused with purple between the veins; upper lemma about the same length as the upper glume and lower lemma, grayish to purplish-grayish, minutely rugulose.

Plant City crabgrass

Digitaria subcalva

Similar Species: Texas crabgrass (*Digitaria texana*) is most similar to Plant City crabgrass but is geographically separated, occurring in east Texas.

Related Rare Species: There are no other closely related rare species in Florida.

Habitat: Rare in calcareous fringing wet grasslands in Polk and Highlands counties, Florida, and historically from "low hammock land (Scranton fine sand) near a marsh" at Plant City (Hillsborough County). Calcareous fringing wet prairies often form the zone between oak hammocks and marshes in this region (Bridges and Orzell 2018b).

Best Survey Season: Flowering: October -November

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to peninsular FL (Highlands, Polk, Hillsborough counties).

Conservation Status: The small range and rarity of the species, coupled with development pressure on unprotected sites and military exercises, forestry operations, recreational activities and any changes in prescribed fire management affect the known populations on Avon Park Bombing Range.

Protection and Management: Protect known sites from forestry operations, recreational activities and military exercises (if possible). Continue to apply prescribed fire within the habitat type at the appropriate fire return interval.

References: Bridges and Orzell 2018b, Weakley, A. S. and Southeastern Flora Team 2024