

SAVANNA GRASS-LEAVED ASTER

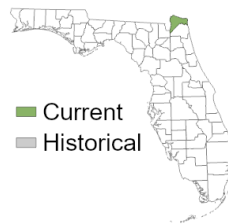
Eurybia paludosa (Ait.) Nesom

Synonyms: *Aster paludosus* Ait. ssp. *paludosus* ; *Aster paludosus* Ait.

Family: Asteraceae (composite)

FNAI Ranks: GNR/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-none



Inflorescence flat-topped; ray flowers 15 - 20 mm long. Photo © Alan Cressler.

Field Description: Perennial **Herbs** to 20 - 80 cm tall; in clumps and clones, eglandular; rhizomes creeping, herbaceous and thin, becoming thick and woody, scaly. **Stems** 1 - 10+, erect, often reddish, simple, straight (brittle). **Leaves** basal and cauline, firm; basal and proximalmost cauline withering by flowering. **Heads** (1-) 4 - 10+ in open, corymbiform arrays, seldom borne singly, with ascending branches; **ray flowers** 15 - 35, (10-) 15 - 20 mm long; involucre 9 - 11 mm wide, about as wide as long.

Similar Species: There are three other asters (*Eurybia* sp.) in Florida, two of which are rare (see related rare species section) and one being common. Savanna grass-leaved aster is the only species with a flat-topped inflorescence, unlike the others that are elongate. Thistleleaf aster (*Eurybia eryngiifolia*) has a stem that is spreading-hairy throughout and 25 - 60 rays and occurs in flatwoods, mainly in the central panhandle.

savanna grass-leaved aster

Eurybia paludosa

Related Rare Species: Two other rare aster (*Eurybia* sp.) species occur in Florida: Southern pine aster (*Eurybia hemispherica*) and pinewoods aster (*Eurybia spinulosa*). Southern pine aster is similar to savanna grass-leaved aster but differs in having a strigillose upper stem, and pinewoods aster has a villous to glabrescent upper stem.

Habitat: Occurs in wet flatwoods, hillside seepage bogs, and sandhill/pocosin ecotones.

Best Survey Season: Flowering: July-October.

Range-wide Distribution: An Atlantic Coastal Plain endemic: northeastern NC south to southeastern GA and northeastern FL (Nassau County).

Conservation Status: Savanna grass-leaved aster is known from a single occurrence in Nassau County, Florida. The occurrence is protected on Ralph E. Simmons State Forest. The species occurs in wet flatwoods, hillside seepage bogs, and sandhill/pocosin ecotones. Woody shrub encroachment, resultant of fire exclusion, poses a potential threat to this species.

Protection and Management: Utilize prescribed fire at the appropriate fire return intervals and allow fires to burn into and naturally extinguish within wetlands.

References: Flora of North America 2023, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024.



Involucre about as wide as long. Photo © Scott Ward.

savanna grass-leaved aster

Eurybia paludosa



Leaves typically sessile; blades lanceolate or linear-lanceolate to linear.
Photo © Scott Ward.