

HUMMINGBIRD FLOWER

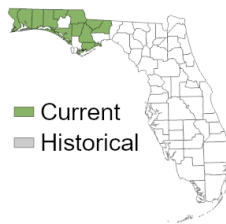
Macranthera flammea (Bartr.) Pennell

Synonyms: *Gerardia flammea* W. Bartram

Family: Orobanchaceae (broomrape)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Photos by Gil Nelson

Field Description: Large, coarse, **biennial herb** with erect, 4-angled stems, 1.5 - 3.0 m tall. **Leaves** 8 - 15 cm long, opposite, deeply lobed and toothed. **Flower** clusters to 0.6 m long; flowers bright orange, fleshy, with a tube to 2.5 cm long and 5 short lobes, on curving flower stalks. Thread-like style and 4 stamens extend well beyond flower tube. Calyx with 5 narrow lobes. **Fruit** an oval capsule with long, persistent style. **Seeds** have 3 fluted wings. Plants are semi-parasitic and turn black when dried. Flowers are very attractive to hummingbirds.

Similar Species: With its large size, deeply cut leaves, and orange tubular flowers, hummingbird flower resembles no other FL species.

Related Rare Species: Chaffseed (*Schwalbea americana*), federally and state-threatened, occurs in moist, grassy ecotones around ponds in longleaf pine sandhills. Chaffseed is a perennial herb with an erect, usually unbranched, hairy stem to 0.6 m tall. Leaves 2 - 4 cm long. Flowers about 2.5 cm long, two-lipped, yellow suffused with purple, especially near the lips, in a spike at the top of the stem.

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Habitat: Seepage slopes, wet streamside thickets, edges of baygalls and cypress - gum ponds. Semi-parasitic on the roots of swamp black gum, bayberry, blackberry, tulip poplar, and other wetland shrubs and trees.

Best Survey Season: Summer; July - September. Fruits and leaves are diagnostic throughout growing season.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, GA, AL, MS, LA.

Conservation Status: Fewer than 30 populations are known in FL, with less than half on managed areas, most in Blackwater River State Forest, Eglin Air Force Base, and Apalachicola National Forest.

Protection and Management: Apply prescribed fire every 2 - 3 years. Avoid altering hydrology of streams and wetlands. Avoid soil disturbances such as conversion to pine plantation. Eradicate feral hogs.

References: Alford 2000, Coile 2000, Determann et al. 1997, Godfrey and Wooten 1981, Musselman 1972, Musselman and Mann 1978, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.

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