

PINEWOODS DAINTIES

Nelica liebmanniana ssp. 1 (Müller of Aargau)

R.W. Bouman

Synonyms: *Phyllanthus platylepis* Small;
Phyllanthus liebmannianus Muell.-Arg. ssp.
platylepis (Small) G.L. Webster

Family: Phyllanthaceae (leaf-flower)

FNAI Ranks: G4T2/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Growing in calcareous wet flatwoods at Tide Swamp Unit of Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Perennial **herb**, hairless throughout, with 1 to several slender, unbranched stems, 8 - 35 cm long, rising from a blackish woody rhizome. **Leaves** 1.5 - 2.5 cm long, alternate, spirally arranged around the stem, widest above the middle, with rounded or pointed tips, dark green above, pale green and veiny below, lacking leafstalks. **Female and male flowers** on the same plant, female flowers about twice as large as male flowers. **Flowers** nodding on long stalks arising from the angle of leaf and stem, with 6 small, pale green sepals and no petals. **Fruit** rounded and flattened on both ends, with 6 lobes and 6 persistent sepals; **calyx lobes** 2.8 - 3.5 mm long (when in fruit); **seeds** 1.7 - 1.8 mm long.

pinewoods dainties

Nellica liebmanniana ssp. 1

Similar Species: Carolina leaf-flower (*Phyllanthus caroliniensis*) bears a slight resemblance to pinewoods dainties. Carolina leaf-flower differs from pinewoods dainties in being an annual with stems glabrous and terete and leaves distichously arranged (vs. spirally arranged); leaf venation clearly visible on the lower surface; pistillate sepals 0.2 - 0.3 mm wide; cymules with 1 staminate and (1-) 2 - 3 (-5) pistillate flowers; pistillate nectary cupular, unlobed, enclosing the ovary 1/3 - 1/2 of its length; seeds 0.7 - 1.1 mm long.

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

Habitat: In low grassy pinelands and hydric hammocks, floodplain and bottomland forests; associated with limestone.

Best Survey Season: Flowering and fruiting late March to late June.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to the "Big Bend" area of the FL Gulf Coast (Dixie, Lafayette, Levy, and Taylor counties).

Conservation Status: Populations are threatened on private land from forestry operations in hardwood hammocks and site-prepping of near coastal wet flatwoods for pine plantation. Where limestone is at the surface within coastal pinelands, forestry practices, such as bedding, are not feasible and some planted stands have remnant populations of pinewoods dainties (e.g. Big Bend Wildlife Management Area).

Protection and Management: Prescribed fire should be applied at the appropriate fire return interval (2 - 4 years) to maintain sunny openings in wet flatwoods. If salvage logging or thinning operations are necessary, known sites should be designated for heavy equipment to avoid. Hardwood hammocks should be protected from logging and hog populations should be managed to reduce digging/rooting effects on the species.

References: Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.



Flowers nodding on long stalks of the leaf axis. Wet flatwoods at Tide Swamp Unit of Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Fruit rounded with six sepals 0.7 - 2.5 mm long. Wet flatwoods at Tide Swamp Unit of Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Growing in calcareous wet flatwoods at Tide Swamp Unit of Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson

