LEWTON’S POLYGALA

*Polygala lewtonii* Small

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Polygalaceae (milkwort)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2/S2

**Legal Status:** US-Endangered FL-Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US-none FL-US–none FL–UPL

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**Field Description:** Perennial herb with 1 to many angled stems up to 8 inches tall. Leaves to 0.5 inch long, succulent, narrow, wider above the middle, held erect in alternate, overlapping clusters along the stem. Flowers small, 0.4 inch long, dark pink, with 2 showy wing-like sepals, 3 small green sepals, and petals fused into a keel with a projecting fringe; flowers in showy, loose spikes on the upper third of stems (inconspicuous self-pollinating flowers also occur on both aerial and underground stems). Fruit oblong, twice as long as wide, partially enclosed by 2 sepals; seed with a fleshy outgrowth and narrow wings.

**Similar Species:** Common milkwort (*Polygala polygama*) is 4 - 20 inches tall and forms large clumps with short branches hugging the ground; leaves are spine-tipped and not in clusters; fruits are oval.

**Related Rare Species:** See tiny polygala (*Polygala smallii*) in this guide.

**Habitat:** Sandhill, scrub, scrubby flatwoods, and their transition zones.

**Best Survey Season:** Flowers February - May
Lewton's polygala  
*Polygala lewtonii*

**Range-wide Distribution:** Endemic to Central Florida ridges in Marion, Lake, Polk, Osceola, and Highlands counties.

**Conservation Status:** About 43 extant populations are known, most on Ocala National Forest and 9 other managed areas.

**Protection and Management:** Purchase and protect intact scrubs and sandhills with *Polygala lewtonii*. Use prescribed fire to create and maintain open habitat.