

## LEWTON'S POLYGALA

*Polygala lewtonii* Small

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Polygalaceae (milkwort)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2/S2

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



**Field Description:** Perennial **herb** with 1 to many angled stems up to 20 cm tall. **Leaves** to 13 mm long, succulent, narrow, wider above the middle, held erect in alternate, overlapping clusters along the stem. **Flowers** small, 10 mm 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 10 - 50 cm 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:** Spring-summer; 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.

**References:** Coile 2000, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a, Wunderlin et al. 1981b.

