

TINY PURSLANE

Portulaca minuta Correll

Synonyms: none

Family: Portulacaceae (purslane)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-none

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-none



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Field Description: Small, herbaceous **perennial** with several erect and spreading **stems** per plant each up to about 3cm in length. Plants are succulent and arising from a thickened, fusiform taproot. **Leaves** are oppositely arranged, obovate to obovate-elliptic in shape, glandular, and up to 5mm long and 3mm wide. **Flowers** are solitary at the apex of stems with 2 veiny sepals and 4 yellow petals, the former about half as long as the latter; flowers have 3 style branches. The **fruit** is an unwinged, dehiscent capsule 2mm wide containing many minute black seeds.

Similar Species: Common purslane (*P. oleracea*) has leaves that are alternate to subopposite, flowers with 5 petals and 3-6 style branches, fruit capsules 4-9 mm wide, and is an annual without an enlarged taproot.

Related Rare Species: There are no other rare species of purslane occurring in Florida.

Tiny Purslane

Portulaca minuta

Habitat: This species is found in shallow, ephemeral freshwater depressions with thin soil layers occurring within pine rockland habitat and in coastal rock barrens. It also occupies rocky roadsides.

Best Survey Season: Flowers are only open under sunny conditions. Flowering may be all year-round but this is not known for certain.

Range-wide Distribution: Outside of the Florida Keys, tiny purslane occurs in the Bahamas where it was once thought to be endemic. This species is known from the islands of Andros, Berry, Bimini, Exumas, and Long.

Conservation Status: This species has a very limited distribution in Florida, only occurring on 3 islands within the Keys, mostly in conservation areas. Where this species occurs along roadsides, it may be threatened by road maintenance activities and in the future will almost certainly be threatened by climate change-associated sea-level rise.

Protection and Management: Because this species was only recently identified as occurring in Florida, it would benefit from a range-wide survey in appropriate habitat. Whether this species is present on other keys should be determined.

References: Weakley et al. 2019, Weakley et al. 2020.