

FLORIDA FLAME AZALEA

Rhododendron austrinum (Small) Rehd.

Synonyms: none

Family: Ericaceae (heath)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FAC+*+ FL-UPL



Amy Jenkins

Field Description: Deciduous, loosely branched woody **shrub** up to 10 feet tall. Winter **buds** hairy. Simple, alternate, glabrous dull green **leaves** 1-3 inches long that have entire margins with small cilia. Yellow-orange **flowers**, emerging before or at the same time as new twigs, are diagnostic.

Similar Species: Mountain azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) has pink flowers and is more typically found in pine flatwoods. Alabama rhododendron (*R. alabamense*) has white flowers, often with a yellow tint to the upper petal. Swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*) has white flowers that average smaller size.

Related Rare Species: Alabama Azalea (*Rhododendron alabamense*), state-endangered, has white flowers, often with a yellow tint to the upper petal.

Habitat: Upland hardwood forests, slope forests, and rises within floodplains and

Florida flame azalea*Rhododendron austrinum*

bottomland forests in the Florida panhandle.

Best Survey Season: Spring; March-April.

Range-wide Distribution: Florida panhandle, Georgia, and Alabama.

Conservation Status: Many populations in Florida are on protected managed areas.

Protection and Management: Avoid logging, fire, or other disturbance in upland hardwood forests. Do not remove wild azaleas from their habitats

References: Chafin 2000, Chafin 2007, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011