

FRINGED CAMPION

Silene catesbyi Walter

Synonyms: *Silene baldwinii* Nutt.; *Silene polypetala* (Walt.) Fern. & Schub.

Family: Caryophyllaceae (pink)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S1?

Legal Status: US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



Amy Jenkins



Field Description: Perennial **herb**, spreading by runners, rooting at nodes in the leaf litter, and forming mats. **Leaves** 2.5 - 10 cm long, widest above the middle, opposite, with hairy, narrowly winged **leaf stalks**. **Flowering stems** erect, to 25 cm tall, rising from rosettes that form at the tips of runners. **Flowers** up to 7.5 cm across, pale pink, with 5 deeply fringed petals. **Fruit** is an ovoid capsule with reddish-brown **seeds**.

Similar Species: Many wildflower species have rosettes of leaves connected by hairy, creeping stems; when not in flower, fringed campion is distinguished by the narrowly winged, hairy leafstalks. When in flower, fringed campion is unmistakable.

Related Rare Species: Fire pink (*Silene virginica*), state-endangered, with only one known location in a hardwood forest in Bay County, has bright red, notched petals and weak, sticky-hairy stems. Royal catchfly (*Silene regia*), with red notchless petals, was known from one location in Jackson County. Carolina catchfly (*Silene caroliniana*), with white or pink flowers, is known from one location, a dry hammock in Okaloosa County.

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Habitat: Slope forests and in stream terraces, usually on the mid- to lower slopes, over low-acid soils.

Best Survey Season: Spring; mid-March to early May; plant is difficult to identify without flowers and goes dormant quickly after flowering.

Range-wide Distribution: FL Panhandle near the Apalachicola River; in southern and central Georgia along the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers.

Conservation Status: There are 12 occurrences of fringed campion in Florida, less than half of which are protected on conservation lands. Even within these protected locations, populations are severely threatened by invasive plant species such as coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*) and Japanese climbing fern (*Lygopodium japonicum*). Outside of managed areas, populations are threatened by intensive forestry practices. While it is certain that Hurricane Michael dramatically impacted this species' habitat throughout its range in Florida, the direct effect on populations is unknown.

Protection and Management: Beneficial management for fringed campion should include maintaining intact forest canopy and ensuring best management practices are used when forestry activities occur, removing invasive plants by hand-clearing to avoid further disturbance, and avoiding fire in the non-fire adapted habitat in which this species occurs.

References: Allison 1991c, Anderson 1991a Anderson 1995b, Coile 1992, Coile 2000, Kral 1983, Patrick et al. 1995, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.

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