

## QUILLWORT YELLOW-EYED GRASS

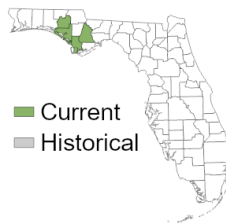
*Xyris isoetifolia* Kral

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Xyridaceae (yellow-eyed grass)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2/S2

**Legal Status:** US-none; FL-Endangered



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**Field Description:** Perennial herb growing in small, dense clumps. **Leaves** 4 - 15 cm long, erect, narrow, wiry, pointed, twisted, and smooth; **leaf bases** widened, brownish, and shiny. **Flower stalk** to 30 cm tall, slightly twisted and without ridges, with a sheath at the base that is shorter than the leaves. **Flower head** 4 mm long, oval, cone-like, composed of loosely overlapping, dark brown bracts with rounded tips. **Flowers** protruding from tips of bracts, opening in the morning and withering by afternoon; with 3 oval, yellow petals; 3 bearded, sterile stamens; and ciliate sepals that do not extend above the tips of the bracts.

**Similar Species:** Baldwin's yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris baldwiniana*) has tightly overlapping bracts in the flower head and beardless sterile stamens. Elliott's yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris elliotii*) has flower stalks 0.2 - 0.6 m tall, wider leaves with pale thickened margins, and loosely overlapping bracts.

## Quillwort yellow-eyed grass

*Xyris isoetifolia*

**Related Rare Species:** Kral's yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris longisepala*), state-endangered, has flower stalks 0.3 - 0.9 m tall, pinkish leaf bases, and fringed lateral sepals visible outside the bracts; flowers open mid-day.

**Habitat:** Margins of karst ponds, sinkhole lakes, and sandhill upland lakes; seepage slopes and bogs; wet prairies.

**Best Survey Season:** Summer; July - November.

**Range-wide Distribution:** FL Central Panhandle and possibly AL.

**Conservation Status:** This species remains in the seedbank during years with unfavorable hydrological conditions, so sites can go for years without plants being seen. Numbers and presences of plants vary from year to year with water levels. Quillwort yellow-eyed grass is highly threatened by land-use conversion including turning pond edges into sandy beaches for recreation, habitat fragmentation, human disturbance, and forest management practices.

**Protection and Management:** Protect karst and sinkhole ponds; prevent clearing of shoreline vegetation. Prevent conversion of seepage slopes and wet prairies to pine plantations; if logged, do not bed or chop. Burn seepage slopes and wet prairies every 2 - 3 years.

**References:** FNA 2000, Godfrey and Wooten 1979, Kral 1966, Kral 1983, Southern Appalachian Species Viability Project 2002, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.

