



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Natural Heritage Program

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*Prenanthes barbata* (Torr. & Gray) Milstead  
**Barbed Rattlesnake-Root**

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**Identification:** Tall virgate perennial herb, 5-15 dm tall. Stems nearly simple, erect and leafy except in the immediate vicinity of the heads. Leaves alternate, some of the mistem pinnately lobed; upper 1-2 dm of stem repeatedly branched, each ultimate branchlet drooping and bearing a pendulous head. Involucres at anthesis nearly cylindrical, 1-2 cm long. Inner phyllaries are longer, 6-8 in number, linear and in a double row; outer phyllaries are smaller, lance-subulate, much shorter, calyculate, each with a row of short coarse bristles; receptacle naked. Heads with 10-12 ray flowers. Corollas white or with a roseate or creamy tinge, bilaterally symmetrical, the ray portion 5-toothed terminally. Achenes 8-10 mm long.

**Key ID characters:**

- Some leaves may be pinnately (not palmately) lobed.
- Small bracts around the base of the involucre usually with a row of short coarse bristles.
- Principal phyllaries 6-8.
- Heads usually with 10-12 flowers.
- Petals white or with a roseate or creamy tinge.

**Habitat:** Mixed Hardwood-Loblolly woods and riparian forests.

**Taxonomic Comments:** This species is a member of the family Asteraceae (Compositae). There are 2 species of the genus *Prenanthes* known to occur in LA.

**Status:**

Wetland: No Data  
Global: G2/G3 - Imperiled  
State: S1 - Critically Imperiled



Riparian Forest

**Range:** Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas.

**Soils:** Sandy soils.

**Similar Species:** There is only one other species of the genus *Prenanthes* represented in LA. *P. altissima* is somewhat more commonly (but also rare) found and is easily distinguished from *P. barbata* by having 5 principle phyllaries and only 5-6 flowers per head. It should also be noted that the known distributions of *P. altissima* and *P. barbata* meet but do not overlap.



*P. altissima*



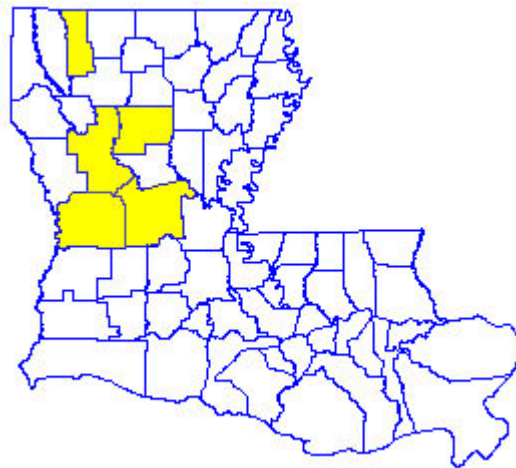
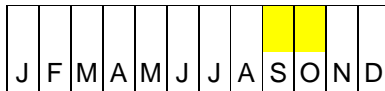
*P. altissima*

**Reason for Rarity:** Habitat loss.

**Known Distribution in Louisiana:**  
Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon, Webster, Winn

**Dates of Natural Heritage Program Observations:**  
1981, 1989, 1990(4), 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2001

**Best Time for Viewing this Species:**



Distribution in Louisiana

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