



Rare Plants of Louisiana

Linum macrocarpum – Spring Hill flax Flax Family (Linaceae)

Rarity Ranks: SH/G2

Range: AL, FL, LA, MS

Recognition:

- 1) Tall slender plant, 2-5 ft tall, unbranched below inflorescence.
- 2) Most of stem leaves alternate, those on the lower stem opposite
- 3) Leaves narrowly elliptic, to 1" long.
- 4) Upper stem leaves gradually reduced in size
- 5) Flowers yellow in a terminal inflorescence
- 6) Fruits purple-pigmented, 3.4-3.8 mm long by 3.2-3.4 mm broad
- 7) Seeds 2.7 mm long or longer (fruit and seed size is critical in separating this species from *Linum floridanum*, which may occur at the same site)



Photo by Bruce Sorrie

Flowering time: May-July; **Fruit** - Fall

Light Requirement: Full sun

Wetland Status: FAC - similar likelihood of occurring in both wetlands and non-wetlands

Habitats: Longleaf pine flatwoods savannah and seepage bogs. Associates include pitcher plants (*Sarracenia* spp.), sundews (*Drosera* spp.), colic-root (*Aletris* spp.), butterworts (*Pinguicula* spp.), golden crest (*Lophiola aurea*), hatpins (*Eriocaulon* spp.), etc. There is presently little known about the ecology of Spring Hill Flax. Further field work across its range is necessary to gain a better understanding of this species.

Threats:

- 1) Conversion of habitat to intensively-managed pine plantations (chemical and mechanical site prep and overstocking)
- 2) Fire exclusion
- 3) Residential and commercial development
- 4) Drainage of habitat, either by ditching or by neglect that allows bogs/savannahs to fill in with trees/shrubs which take up more water and alter groundwater hydrology



Beneficial management practices:

- 1) Thinning, targeting for removal off-site species such as loblolly and slash pines
- 2) Burning, especially during growing season (April-June) for maximum control of woody plants – optimum fire return interval for savannahs and bogs is 1-3(-4) years
- 3) Refrain from creating drainage ditches and plowed fire lines (prepare fire lines by hand)



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Specimen of Spring Hill flax representing the only record of this species from Louisiana. Specimen collected in 1975. Image provided by Dennis Bell, ULM Herbarium.

References:

NatureServe. 2006. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: February 5, 2007).

Rogers, C.M. 1963. Yellow flowered species of *Linum* in eastern North America. *Brittonia* 15: 97-122.