

# Rare Plants of Louisiana



## *Serenoa repens* - saw palmetto Palm Family (Arecaceae)

**Rarity Rank:** S1/G4G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State	Yellow				
Global				Yellow	Yellow
	imperiled		rare		secure



**Range:** AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, SC, TX

### **Recognition:**

- Low prostrate shrub with palm-like, fan-shaped leaves
- Petioles bear recurved spines on both edges, resembling a saw blade
- Stems aerial (if not buried by sand) and horizontal
- Leaf blades are fan-like with larger leaves being up to 60 cm long by 90 cm wide, nearly round in outline with segments radiating from one point; yellow-green to green in color
- 3-parted flowers are white, numerous, arranged in a panicle
- Fruit is an oblong black drupe from 15 to 25 mm long

**Flowering Time:** Spring; flowering can occur during other seasons following fire

**Light Requirement:** Full sun to part shade

### **Wetland Indicator Status:**

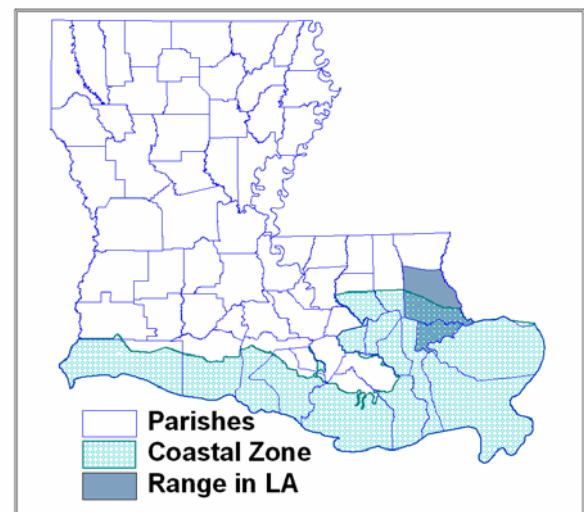
FACU – usually occurs in uplands but occasionally found in wetlands

### **Habitat:**

Louisiana occurrences are on remnant barrier islands and hammocks on the North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain and to the east of New Orleans. Field work is necessary to relocate North Shore populations and update records for these.

### **Threats:**

- Subsidence is a potential threat
- Shading or suppression by other woody vegetation in the absence of fire (?)



### **Beneficial Management Practices:**

Conduct a status survey and conservation assessment for this species in Louisiana, involving field work to relocate North shore populations

**LA River Basins:** Pearl, Pontchartrain

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**Left:** Base of a small plant of *Serenoa repens* showing evident prickles on both sides of the petioles.



*Serenoa repens* on Pine Island, Bayou Sauvage NWR, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. Here *S. repens* occurs in sandy soil with much red bay (*Persea palustris*) in the overstory)

## References:

- Clewell, A.F. 1985. Guide to the vascular plants of the Florida Panhandle. Florida State University Press, Tallahassee. 605 pp.
- Godfrey, R.K. 1988. Trees, shrubs, and woody vines of northern Florida and adjacent Georgia and Alabama. The University of Georgia Press, Athens and London. 734 pp.
- Nelson, G. 1996. The shrubs and woody vines of Florida. Pineapple Press, Sarasota, FL. 391 pp.
- USDA, NRCS. 2007. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

<http://www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program> or 225-765-2811

[www.BTNEP.org](http://www.BTNEP.org) or 1-800-259-0869