

# Rare Plants of Louisiana



## *Thalia dealbata* - powdery thalia Prayer Plant Family (Marantaceae)

**Rarity Rank:** S2S3/G4

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

**Range:** AR, GA, IL, KY, LA, MO, MS, SC, TX

### Recognition:

- Large, tropical-looking, erect perennial herb, up to ca 2 m tall
- Often grows in large colonies from thick rhizomes
- Leaves long-stalked, stalks to 80 cm long, blades banana-like, to ca 50 cm long
- Inflorescence a panicle at the terminus of an elongate stalk, covered with a powdery substance (hence the common name), flowers purplish
- Panicle narrow with stiff, short, zigzagging branches



**Flowering Time:** May to September

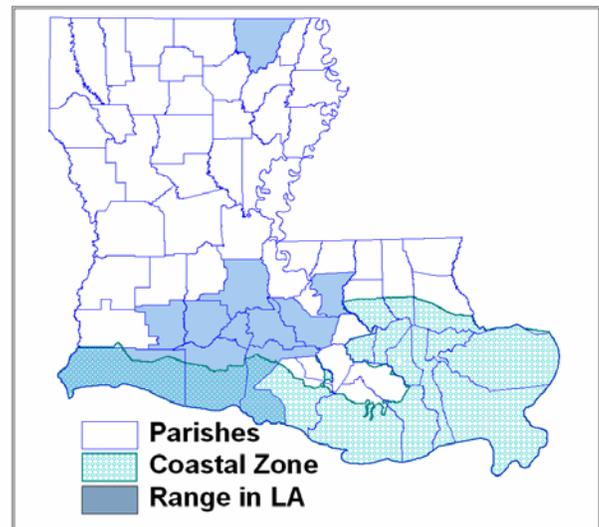
**Light Requirement:** Full sun

### Wetland Indicator Status:

OBL – almost always in wetlands

### Habitat:

Most of our occurrences are in roadside and irrigation ditches, also moist soil management units and shorelines. Frequent inundation, open muddy substrate, and recurring disturbance characterize these areas.



### Threats:

- Occurs where salinities are around 0 ppt, so presumably negatively affected by salinity increases
- Dredging and scarping out of ditches can reduce the aerial extent of colonies
- Application of herbicides on roadside ditches

### Beneficial Management Practices:

- Protect known colonies when managing roadside and drainage ditches
- Fire or mowing to prevent establishment of invading woody species

**LA River Basins:** Pontchartrain, Terrebonne, Atchafalaya, Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine, Ouachita

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**Above:** *Thalia dealbata* in drainage ditch in cotton field, Morehouse Parish

**Left:** Close up of a *Thalia dealbata* inflorescence; note whitish powdery surfaces and zigzag appearance of naked branches

## References:

Diggs, G. M., B. L. Liscomb, M. D. Reed, and R. J. O'kennon. 2006. Illustrated Flora of East Texas. Vol. 1. Botanical Research Institute of Texas & Austin College. 1594 pp.

Stutzenbaker, C. D. 1999. Aquatic and wetland plants of the western Gulf Coast. Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, Austin. 465 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

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