

Gentian Pinkroot

GP06162016

IDENTIFICATION: Gentian Pinkroot, *Spigelia gentianoides*, is a fire dependent perennial herb that produces a slender, erect stem up to 30 centimeters tall from a rhizome. Leaves are approximately 5 centimeters long by 2 centimeters wide and arranged oppositely. Flowers are tubular in shape up to 3 centimeters in length with five triangular lobes. Typically blooms in May and June but has been documented from April through October.

There are two varieties of gentian pinkroot. The Alabama variety, *S. gentianoides* var. *alabamensis*, has only been found at the Bibb County Glades - the most biologically diverse area in the State of Alabama. The variety *gentianoides* occurs in Geneva County Alabama on the Geneva State Forest and several locations in Florida. The *gentianoides* variety is restricted to longleaf-wiregrass, pine-oak-hickory woods, and open spaces within forests with little woody understory competition. The *alabamensis* variety is found in open areas within woodlands of Bibb County, Alabama.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service [recovery plan](#) lists habitat loss and alteration as the primary threats to gentian pinkroot. Activities that cause soil compaction, canopy closure and disruption of fire regimes are factors contributing to these threats. Habitat loss through development is also a threat to this species.

FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: Gentian pinkroot grows well in fire maintained habitats that provide an open understory with little woody competition. An active but not frequent prescribed fire regime should be beneficial. Although not required by Alabama or federal laws/policies, pre-harvest plans should include a strategy to be as environmentally friendly as possible to sites with gentian pinkroot. Location of skid trails, loading decks, roads and other high use areas should be carefully planned to minimize negative impacts.

DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY: This plant is known to occur only in Bibb and Geneva counties.



S. gentianoides var. *alabamensis*
Photo credit: Alan Cressler



S. gentianoides var. *gentianoides*
Photo credit: AL. Forestry Commission



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