

IDENTIFICATION: Harperella (*Harperella nodosa*) is an herbaceous plant that is a member of the carrot family (Apiaceae). It has narrow, quill-like leaves up to 16 inches long growing from the base of the plant, becoming shorter as they get higher on the stem. Small, inconspicuous flowers are typically present from June into August. It grows mostly within the cracks of rocky, shallow rivers and along rocky banks, gravel bars, and seepages of granite flatrocks, and shoals near creek beds. Three taxa are sometimes recognized, but recent studies don't provide enough morphological or molecular differences to separate them. Plants in stream habitats rely heavily on short duration spring floods to scour the gravel bars and rock crevices to prevent substantial soil accumulations in which weedy competitors would thrive. Harperella seeds germinate after floodwaters subside and complete their life cycle in the remaining submerged or saturated rocky substrate. This species is aromatic and smells like dill.



Harperella was found at 13 locations when [listed as an endangered species](#) in 1988. Critical habitat was not designated at the time of listing. The recovery plan states there must be 26 self-sustaining, permanently protected populations located throughout its historical range to delist it from the Endangered Species Act.



FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: Forestry activities are not likely to occur where this plant grows if Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry are followed. If operations are planned, include extra wide streamside management zones to prevent siltation. Thinnings and harvest should be done under the supervision of someone familiar with the plant. As always, broadcast use of herbicides should be done in accordance with label instructions.

DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY: Distributions currently found only in Cherokee and Dekalb counties.

Photo Credits: Dr. T. Wayne Barger, Natural Heritage Section, Alabama State Lands Division



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