

FLORIDA BEARGRASS

Nolina atopocarpa Bartlett

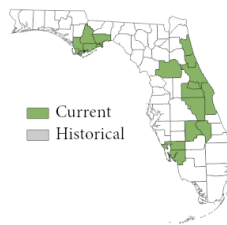
Synonyms: none

Family: Asparagaceae (asparagus)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Threatened

Wetland Status: US-FAC+ FL-FAC



Photos by Nicole Zampieri

Field Description: Florida beargrass grows as a rosette that forms bulblike bases. The leaf blades are wiry, stiff, flattened, and grass-like. The leaves are less than 0.2 inches wide and can be up to 3 feet long. The flowers are greenish-white in color. Florida beargrass is fire-tolerant and possibly fire-dependent.

Similar Species: It is distinguishable from rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) by lacking marginal bristles.

Related Rare Species: Britton's beargrass (*Nolina brittoniana*), state-threatened, occurs in scrub, scrubby flatwoods, and sandhill in Central FL. Leaves are longer (up to 6 feet long) and wider (0.5 inches wide) than Florida beargrass.

Habitat: In grassy areas of wet flatwoods

Best Survey Season: Spring.

Florida beargrass

Nolina atopocarpa

Range-wide Distribution: Locally abundant in the Liberty and Franklin Cos. and in disjunct populations in southwest FL flatwoods and a few northeastern coastal counties.

Conservation Status: Over 150 element occurrences are known, but low number of individuals are common. Natural habitat is declining in quality and extent. Primary threats are intensive forestry management practices and fire suppression.

Protection and Management: Conduct prescribed fires to stimulate flowering and eliminate competition by shrub, trees, and exotics.

References: Kartesz 1994, Small 1933, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.