



Rare Plants of Louisiana

Trillium texanum – Texas trillium

Lily family (Liliaceae)

Rarity Ranks: S1/G2G3Q

Range: LA, TX

Recognition:

- 1) Solitary white flowers on a short stalk, situated above three bracteal leaves
- 2) Single oval-shaped leaves and scapes with three leaves may be found within a single colony
- 3) Flowers with three white petals, withering to a pinkish color



Flowering Time: March – mid April

Light Requirement: Shade of forest understory – Texas trillium flowers before full leaf-out of overstory species and before being overtopped by other herbaceous species

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL – almost always occurs in wetlands

Habitat: Baygalls and forested seeps imbedded in sandy uplands. Associates include swamp blackgum (*Nyssa biflora*), sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*), royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), cinnamon fern (*O. cinnamomea*), netted chain fern (*Woodwardia areolata*), and green rein orchid (*Platanthera clavellata*).

Threats:

- 1) Siltation of habitat from activities upslope
- 2) Timber harvesting in seep/baygall habitat – this damages soil which is usually wet and it opens up growing space to weedy species including exotics such as Chinese privet, Japanese honeysuckle, which crowd out Texas trillium
- 3) Livestock grazing/trampling
- 4) Alteration of hydrology (drying of groundwater seepage or drowning by damming of streams)



Beneficial management practices:

- 1) Follow Best Management Practices, being more liberal with Streamside Management Zone width where steep slopes occur above baygalls and bogs to prevent habitat from being buried with sandy wash
- 2) Avoid harvesting timber in Texas trillium habitat, which is usually perennially mucky with seepage
- 3) Keep livestock out of Texas trillium habitat
- 4) Manage adjacent upland forests with thinning and burning
- 5) Do NOT dam streams and drown forested seep/baygall habitat



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Texas trillium colony with many single leaves and few flowering scapes.



Texas trillium flowering individual. Note sweetgum ball at the base of the trillium and dried whitish sweetbay magnolia leaves, both typical associates. The fern emerging in the left side of the picture is netted chain fern. Photo taken in Caddo Parish, Louisiana.

References:

Kral, R. 1983. A report on some rare, threatened, or endangered forest-related vascular plants of the South. Vol. 1. USDA Forest Service, Tech. Publ. R8-TP2: 1-718.

MacRoberts, M.H. & B.R. MacRoberts. 2005. The ecology of *Trillium texanum* (Trilliaceae) on the Angelina National Forest, Texas. *Sida* 21(3): 1893-1903.