



## **Threatened Species:** **SMALL-WHORLED POGONIA** *Isotria medeoloides* **(Orchid Family)**

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The small whorled pogonia is a perennial, orchid 15-25cm (6-10 inches) tall. A single whorl of 5-6, pale, dusty green, drooping, 5-8cm (2-3.2 inches) long, 3-5cm (1.2-2 inches) wide leaves grow from the top of the stem. The leaf stalk and leaves can have a grayish coating over their surfaces.

Flowering is in May. Single (rarely two) flowers grow from the center of the leaves and are tubular, yellow-green colored, and asymmetrical (orchid-like). The middle petal is greenish-white, 3-lobed, 15mm (0.6 inches) long, 5mm (0.2 inches) wide, and ridged or crested down the middle. This petal crest has small yellow warts. Fruiting is in June and July. The fruit is an elliptical capsule 2.5cm (1 inch) long and 1cm (0.4 inches) wide.

Similar species include the large whorled pogonia (*Isotria verticillata*) which has a purplish-green stem, and spreading rather than drooping leaves, and the Indian cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*) which has six or more slender leaves and a stem with cobwebby clusters of trichomes (plant hairs).

The small whorled pogonia is found in middle-aged, dry hardwood or mixed pine-hardwood forests with an open canopy, open understory, and sparse covered ground surface. Usually found near long-term canopy gaps such as streams, vine gaps, and old roads. Orchid collectors and small population size are major factors in the decline of this species.

Figure 1 shows the general regional distribution of this orchid. This species is listed as a federally threatened species. Its native range is considered to cover 22 states/disticts and one province. Figure 2 provides the county distribution map for Georgia. Several photographs are provided to show habitat and plant form.

### Citation:

Coder, Kim D. 2021. Threatened Species: SMALL-WHORLED POGONIA *Isotria medeoloides* (Orchid Family). University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources Outreach Publication WSFNR21-12C. Pp.5

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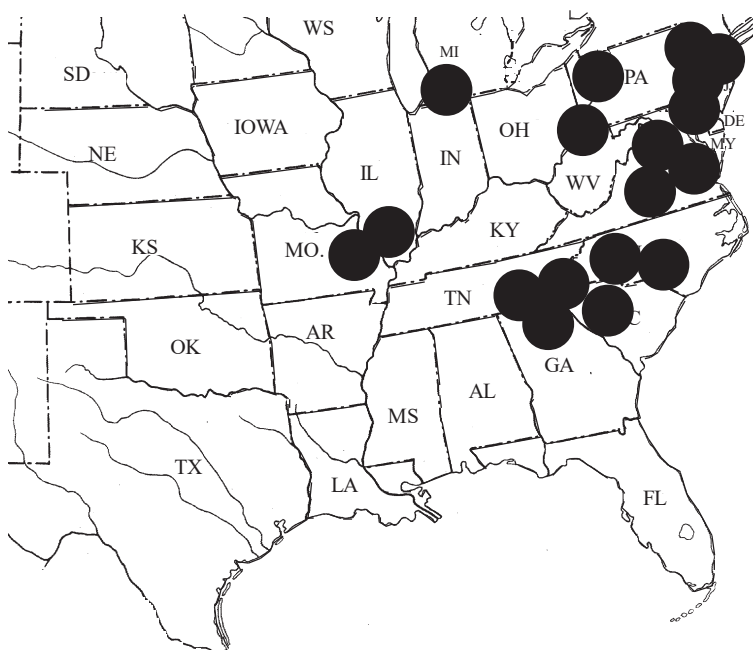
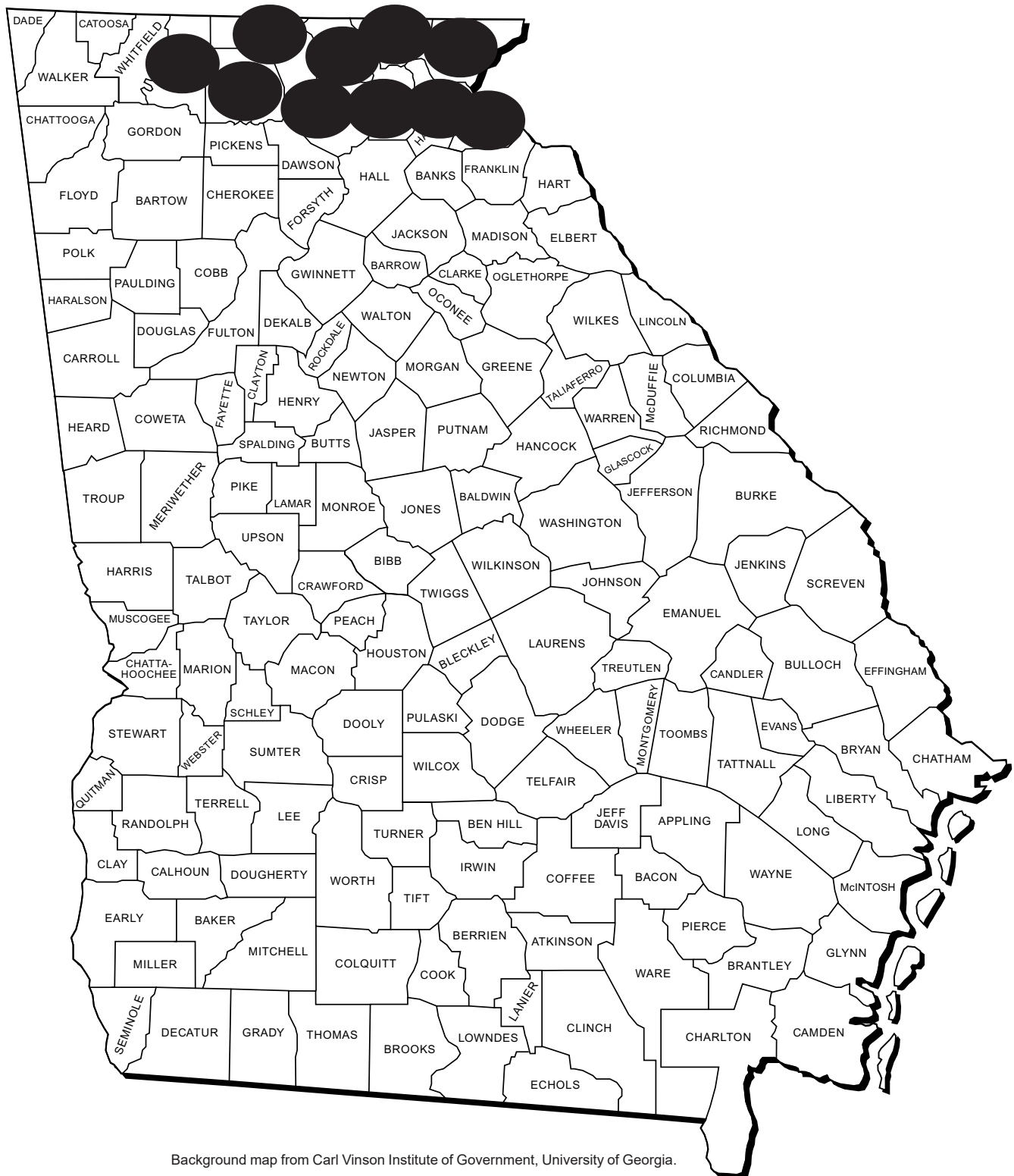


Figure 1: General distribution in the Southeastern US.



**Figure 2: County distribution in Georgia.**





Appearance of forest gap habitat where plant is growing.  
Micro-site with plant. (photo credits Dr. Kim D. Coder)







Leaves, stem,  
flower and old  
stock with fruit capsule.



(photo credits Dr. Kim D. Coder)