



**Common Name:** FLORIDA TOOTHACHE GRASS

**Scientific Name:** *Ctenium floridanum* (Hitchcock) Hitchcock

**Other Commonly Used Names:** Florida orange-grass

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** *Campulosus floridanus* Hitchcock

**Family:** Poaceae/Gramineae (grass)

**Rarity Ranks:** G2/S1

**State Legal Status:** Special Concern

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** FACW

**Description:** Perennial **grass** with flowering **stalks** usually up to 3 feet (1 meter) tall, rising in a row from underground **stems (rhizomes)**. **Basal leaves** 2 - 15 inches (39 cm) long and ¼ inch (0.5 cm) wide, bright green on both surfaces, with roughly hairy veins. **Stem leaves** few, scattered, strongly inrolled along edges, shorter than basal leaves. **Flowers (spikelets)** in a dense, one-sided, comb-like **spike** that curls and spirals as it dries. Second glume of the spikelet (see drawing) with a slender, pointed bristle (**awn**); if a row of glands occurs on the second glume, it is low and inconspicuous; these **glands** are usually absent.

**Similar Species:** Common toothache grass (*Ctenium aromaticum*) grows in dense clumps in wet savannas and flatwoods. Its leaves are two-toned: bright green above and pale blue-green below; the second glume of the spikelet has a conspicuous row of glands. These two species of toothache grass are the only grass species in Georgia with a one-sided, comb-like spike at the tip of the flowering stem.

**Related Rare Species:** Thirty species of grasses are rare in Georgia.

**Habitat:** Sandhills and other dry or moist (not wet) pinelands.

**Life History:** Florida toothache grass reproduces vegetatively, sending up new shoots from underground stems. It also flowers, depending on wind for cross-pollination, and produces seed, although nothing is known about seed dispersal or germination.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering and fruiting (summer through early fall), however, dried, curling spikes on flowering stems in a row are visible through the fall and following winter.

**Range:** Southeastern Georgia and northeastern Florida.

**Threats:** Fire suppression, clearcutting, plowing fire breaks and other soil disturbances, conversion of habitat to developments and pine plantations.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Approximately 5 populations are known, only one in a conservation area.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Burn sandhills and flatwoods every 2 - 3 years during the growing season. Avoid clearcutting, bedding, plowing fire lanes, and other soil disturbances.

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**Date Compiled or Updated:**

L. Chafin, April 2007: original account

K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added pictures

FLORIDA TOOTHACHE GRASS  
*Ctenium floridanum*

