



Common Name: THREE-FLOWERED HAWTHORN

Scientific Name: *Crataegus triflora* Chapman

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Rarity Ranks: G2G3/S1

State Legal Status: Threatened

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: **Shrub** to 20 feet (6 meters) tall, usually 3 - 6 feet (1 - 2 meters), with 1 - several trunks, scaly bark (on older trunks), hairy twigs, and **thorns** up to 2 inches (5 cm) long, often 3-pronged. **Leaves** up to 2¾ inches (2 - 7 cm) long, oval, with toothed margins, each tooth tipped with a tiny gland; both leaf surfaces usually velvety-hairy; **leaf stalks** with gland-tipped hairs. **Flowers** about 1 inch (2.5 - 3 cm) wide, with 5 white, rounded petals; 25 - 40 yellow stamens; and 5 toothed, gland-tipped sepals; flower stalks covered with gland-tipped hairs; flowers usually in clusters of 3, but may be as many as 7 per cluster. **Fruit** about ½ inch (1.2 - 1.5 cm) wide, round, red; flesh is orange and succulent when fully ripened, with 5 seeds per fruit.

Similar Species: Several other hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.) grow in similar habitats; three-flowered hawthorn is distinguished by its usually 3-flowered clusters, flowers with more than 20 stamens, glandular-hairy leaf stalks, and hairy, gland-toothed leaves with few or no lobes.

Related Rare Species: See Rome hawthorn (*Crataegus aemula*) and beautiful hawthorn (*Crataegus pulcherrima*) on this website.

Habitat: Moist, wooded ravines and slopes over limestone or mafic rock in northwest Georgia; Black Belt prairies with basic soils in the inner Coastal Plain.

Life History: Hawthorns reproduce sexually, attracting pollinators such as bees and beetles by their showy flowers and nectar. Fruits are eaten by birds, who disperse the seeds; seed germination is improved if the seed passes through a bird's digestive tract and if the seed has been through one cold winter. Plants will flower at four years, when they are about 3 feet (1 meter) tall. Three-flowered hawthorn is known to hybridize with (*Crataegus ashei*) and other hawthorns.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (April–May), when leaves are about ½ - ¾ expanded.

Range: Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and possibly Tennessee.

Threats: Logging, development, and other clearing. Infection by cedar-apple rust.

Georgia Conservation Status: Fifteen populations are known, 5 on conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Avoid clearcutting and other mechanical disturbances. Remove nearby red cedar trees, which host cedar-apple rust, a fungal blight that attacks three-flowered hawthorn.

Selected References:

Allison, J.R. 1999. Status survey for *Crataegus triflora* and *Viburnum bracteatum* in Georgia. Georgia Natural Heritage Program, Social Circle.

Lance, R. 1995. The hawthorns of the southeastern United States. Published by the author, Fletcher, North Carolina.

Lance, R. 2004. Woody plants of the southeastern United States: a winter guide. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

Lance, R. 2006. The hawthorns of Georgia. *Tipularia* 21: 15-39.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. 2007. *Crataegus triflora* species account. http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/fact_sheet_plant/31969-Crataegus%20triflora/crataegus_triflora.pdf

NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer. Arlington, Virginia. <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>

Phipps, J.B., R. Lance, and K.A. Dvorsky. 2006. *Crataegus* series *Bracteatae* and *Triflorae* (Rosaceae). *Sida* 22(2): 1009-1025.

Weakley, A.S. 2007. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill.

Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L. Chafin, Aug. 2007: original account

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

G. Krakow. Apr. 2015: updated link to Louisiana DWF species account

THREE-FLOWERED HAWTHORN
Crataegus triflora

