Common Name: GEORGIA INDIGO-BUSH

Scientific Name: *Amorpha georgiana* Wilbur

Other Commonly Used Names: Georgia lead plant, Georgia lead bush

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Fabaceae/Leguminosae (pea)

Rarity Ranks: G3T2/S1

State Legal Status: Endangered

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: FACW

Description: Woody subshrub 1 - 3 feet (30 - 100 cm) tall with smooth or nearly hairless stems. Leaves up to 7 inches (18 cm) long, alternate, with 11 - 47 leaflets, leaf stalks up to ⅜ inch (20 mm) long. Leaflets ¼ - ½ inch (0.6 - 1.2 cm) long, oblong, with inrolled margins; midvein of each leaflet extends beyond the tip into a tiny, sharp point. Flower clusters 1 - 2¾
inches (2.5 - 7 cm) long. **Flower** with only 1 purple petal and 10 orange-tipped stamens. **Fruit** pod less than ¼ inch (0.5 cm) long, wider at the tip, tapering to the base.

**Similar Species:** Indigo-bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) is a common shrub, 3 - 12 feet (1 - 4 m) tall; its leaflets are ¼ - 1½ inch (1 - 4 cm) long and its leaf stalks are ¼ - 1½ inches (1 - 4 cm) long. The midvein of the leaflet extends into a pointed or swollen tip, and the margins of the leaflets are not inrolled. Goat’s-rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*) is a common perennial herb with similar compound leaves that have 15 - 25 leaflets. The leaflets lack the sharply pointed tip, and its stems are hairy. It has typical, 5-petaled pea-family flowers with an erect, yellow banner petal; two pink wing petals; and a pink keel.

**Related Rare Species:** Florida indigo-bush (*Amorpha herbacea* var. *floridana*) is a low shrub found on the Alapaha River floodplain; the midvein of the leaflet extends beyond the tip into a round, swollen gland. Shining indigo-bush (*A. nitens*), a tall shrub found on rocky slopes and floodplains in several northwest Georgia and Piedmont counties, has 3 - 9 pairs of shiny leaflets, usually without an extended midvein tip. Schwerin’s indigo-bush (*A. schwerinii*), a tall shrub, occurs in rocky, upland woods in 5 Piedmont counties; its flowers are white; leaflet margins are slightly inrolled, and the midvein extends beyond the tip into a round gland. All are considered to be of Special Concern in Georgia.

**Habitat:** Longleaf pine woodlands and savannas, sunny openings around Altamaha Grit and flint kaolin outcrops, and stream terraces. Although classified as a “facultative wetland” (FACW) species, Georgia indigo-bush has not been seen in wetlands in Georgia.

**Life History:** Georgia indigo-bush flowers are probably pollinated by small bumblebees and small flower bees (Halictids) as well as long-horned beetles and pearl crescent butterflies, all of which have been seen on its flowers.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (mid-April–early May) although fruits, which may persist until early April of the following year, are helpful in identification. Plants flower and fruit the first and second years after a fire.

**Range:** Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

**Threats:** Fire suppression, clearing, and conversion of habitat to pine plantations, agricultural fields, and development.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Four populations have been observed; only the Columbia County plants, on private land, have been seen recently.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Apply prescribed fire in longleaf pine stands every 3 - 5 years, or use hand-clearing to maintain openings in the canopy. Avoid clearcutting and other mechanical disturbances.

**Selected References:**


**Author of species account:** Linda G. Chafin

**Date Compiled or Updated:**
L. Chafin, Sept. 2007: original account
K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added pictures
Z. Abouhamdan, April 2016: updated link
GEORGIA INDIGO-BUSH
Amorpha Georgiana var. Georgiana

- pointed leaflet tips
- inrolled leaf margin
- flower with single petal and 10 stamens