

Bermuda Bedstraw

Galium bermudense

Bermuda Protected Species



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Department of Environment & Natural Resources



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Current Status

Native

BPSA: Level 3

CITES: No

Bda Red List: EN

CMS: No

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Ecology

Identification

This low growing perennial is much branched and grows from 6 inches to 2 feet (15-60 cm) in height. Small plants appear as upright stems, while larger plants appear as tangles of almost vine-like stems. The leaves of Bermuda Bedstraw occur in a group of four around the stem. Fine hairs cover the length of the stem and the leaves.

Range

Native to Bermuda the Bahamas and the South Eastern United States.

Habitat

In 1918 Britton wrote that Bermuda Bedstraw was commonly found on the hillsides of Bermuda. It has since become extremely rare. It occurs on grassy or relatively open hillsides, particularly in St. Georges, Somerset and Southampton and in coastal forests on South Shore.

Reproduction and Life Cycle

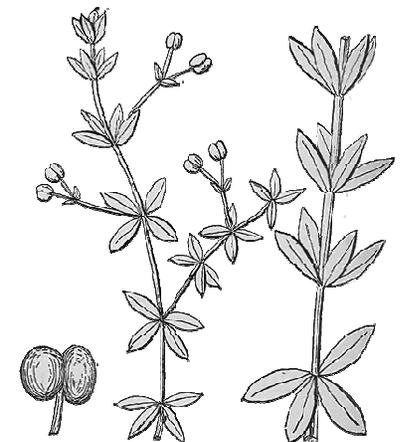
Bedstraw produces greenish-white flowers from spring to autumn, which occur at the tip of branches. The flower is followed by a rounded two-part fruit that turns dark purplish-black when ripe. This species can be propagated from seed.

Why protect this species?

Bermuda Bedstraw is protected as it is an indigenous Bermudian species that has become locally rare. The structure of Bermuda's woodlands has changed over the last 50 years, with fast-growing invasive species crowding out small natives like Bedstraw in the understory, while invasive trees over-shade them from above. These changes in the woodland community, combined with the loss of woodland to development, have seriously reduced the abundance of Bedstraw and make it very unlikely that the species will persist and recover unassisted.

Threats faced by this species include:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Competition from invasive plants
- Lack of awareness leading to accidental destruction



© N.L Britton, 1918

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What is being done to conserve it?

Protected Species Act Listing: Level 3

IUCN Red List: Not assessed.

Recovery Plan: Bermuda Bedstraw is included in the 2009 Recovery Plan for eight species of flowering plants.

Research: distribution mapping for this species has been undertaken and genetic barcoding is also underway.

Habitat Protection: A key habitat of Bermuda Bedstraw became a protected area with the creation of the Vesey Nature Reserve by the Buy Back Bermuda campaign.

Propagation: Bermuda Bedstraw is being propagated from seed for sale to the public and planting of this species for ornamental use, as well as part of woodland restoration projects, is being promoted.

Protective legislation

Protected Species Act (2003)

What you can do?

Plant: purchase this native plant for your home garden or woodland restoration project. It makes an attractive hanging basket.

Learn: understand how destruction of habitat leads to loss of endangered and threatened species and Bermuda's plant and animal diversity. Tell others what you have learned.

Join a conservation group: such as the Bermuda National Trust or the Bermuda Audubon Society to protect habitats.

Control invasive plant species: Invasive plants should be managed in places where specimens of this plant occur so that they do not become overwhelmed by other vegetation. Control invasive species on your property to stop them spreading.

Information sources

To learn more please visit: www.environment.bm

Britton, N.L. 1918. Flora of Bermuda. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Sarkis, S. 2009. Recovery Plan for eight species of flowering plants, *Carex bermudiana*, *Peperomia septentrionalis*, *Phaseolus lignosus*, *Erigeron darrellianus*, *Galium bermudense*, *Chiococca alba*, *Hypericum hypericoides*, *Psychotria ligustrifolia*, in Bermuda. Dept. of Conservation Services, Government of Bermuda pp.28.



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For Further Information

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www.environment.bm

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on the knowledge and understanding at the time of writing.