

Rare Plants

OF COSSATOT RIVER STATE PARK-NATURAL AREA

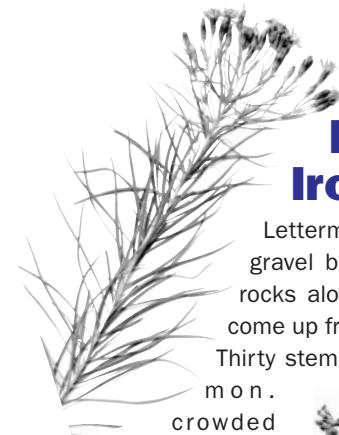
The Cossatot River State Park-Natural Area is located in the Ouachita Mountains. Many plants that occur in the Ouachitas occur nowhere else. These are called “**Ouachita Mountain endemic species.**” Other plants are said to have their “**population center**” located in the Ouachita Mountains. This means most of the plants occur in the Ouachita Mountains, with just a few known to occur outside the Ouachita Mountains. Other plants which occur here are rare because they are on the edge of their geographic range, they are rare throughout their range, or human activities have destroyed their habitats. Currently, there are 28 rare plants known to occur in the park. This brochure lists and describes some of them.



Brown's Waterleaf

Brown's Waterleaf grows in deep shade of moist forests. Leaves are at the base of the plant with the 12"-18" flower stalk in the middle. Flowering from April through May, the light lavender flowers form a ball-shaped flower head on the end of

the stalk. It is endemic to the Ouachita Mountains.



Letterman's Ironweed

Letterman's ironweed grows on gravel bars and in the cracks of rocks along streams. Many stems come up from the base of one plant. Thirty stems per plant is not uncommon.

The stems are crowded with very narrow leaves. Flowering from July to September, the purple to lavender flowers provide a spectacular display on the gravel bars. The Ouachita Mountains are the population center for this species.

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Twistflower

Twistflower is usually found growing in dry, rocky, open areas. The leaves are somewhat heart shaped and clasp the stem. The flowers have four petals which are rose to purplish-red in color. Its flower buds are covered with small hairs. Flowering plants can be six inches to six feet in height. This plant is endemic to the Ouachita Mountains.

River-Weed or Threadfoot

This plant is an indicator of high water quality. It is difficult to see, growing slightly below the surface of rapidly flowing water, attached to large boulders and bedrock. The stems are greenish to reddish-brown in color, and in the Cossatot River these stems are commonly a half inch to one inch in length. This plant can resemble a moss, but it is not a moss. Although it is abundant throughout the Cossatot River within the park and is widely distributed in eastern North America, its populations are in decline due to degradation of water quality.



Compact Blazing Star

The compact blazing star grows in glades, dry woods, and on gravel bars. Each plant has twisted narrow leaves on many stems. Flowering from June to August, the pink to pink-purple flowers make a spectacular display. The Ouachita

Mountains are the population center for this species.

Wood Stonecrop

Growing on mossy banks, around springs, on dripping ledges, and in moist woods, the wood stonecrop grows in clumps up to around six inches tall. Thick, fleshy leaves are clustered in whorls of three around the stem. Its small white flowers may be seen in late

April to early May.



Ouachita Bluet

Ouachita bluet is a delicate-looking plant around seven inches tall. It has narrow leaves with white to light lavender bell-shaped flowers, and grows in dry woods, flowering from late April through May. The Ouachita Mountains are the population center for this species.

Waterfall's Sedge

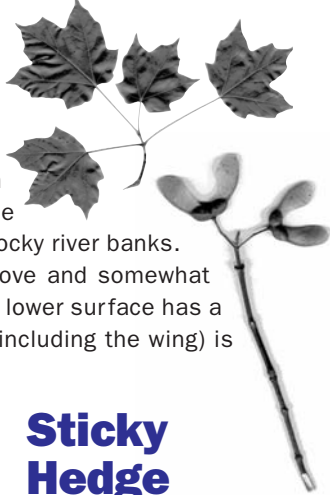
Waterfall's sedge grows in clumps in dry woods and open areas. The flower stem of this grass-like plant has three edges (of triangu



lar shape). Its leaves and flower stem can grow to at least 13 inches. The actual flowers are hidden within green leaflike structures known as bracts. These bracts are around 1 1/2 inch long and 1/4 inch wide. It flowers from April through May and is endemic to the Ouachita Mountains.

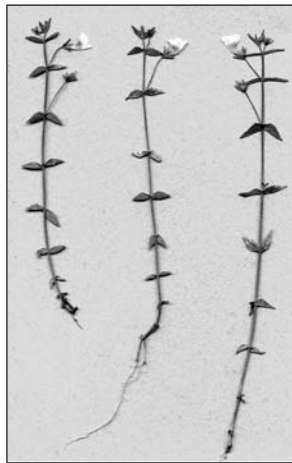
Chalk Maple

Typically, a large, multi-trunked shrub or small tree (20–40 feet tall) with white or grayish bark, the chalk maple grows along rocky river banks. Leaves are dark green above and somewhat yellowish-green below. The lower surface has a velvety feel. Seed length (including the wing) is 3/4 to 1 inch.



Sticky Hedge Hyssop

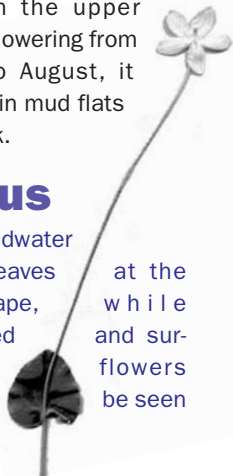
The sticky hedge hyssop is 1 to 12 inches tall. The 1/2-inch tubular flowers are yellowish, with fine dark lines running lengthwise on the lower 2/3 and are whitish on the upper 1/3. Flowering from July to August, it grows in mud flats



or in mud between cracks in bedrock.

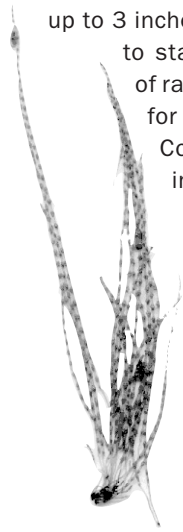
Grass of Parnassus

Grass of Parnassus grows in groundwater seeps. It can grow to 20 inches tall. Leaves at the base of the stem are roundish in shape, while leaves up the stem are heart shaped and surround the stem. The quarter-size flowers are white with green lines and may be seen during September.



Paralemanea grandis

This is a type of red algae. It is one of the few red algae to inhabit fresh water. Most red algae are seaweed. It is olive green in color and has what appear to be knots up and down the stem. Growing in clumps up to 3 inches in length, it is attached at its base to stable rocks slightly below the surface of rapidly flowing water. It may be mistaken for a moss. This algae is common in the Cossatot River in the park and it is an indicator of high water quality.



A variety of plants grow within the protected lands of Cossatot River State Park-Natural Area. Many of these are found only in the Ouachita Mountains, and for some, their only place on Earth is along the banks of the Cossatot.

For more information on the park or programs, contact:

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cossatot@arkansas.com

For information on Arkansas's other state parks, contact:

Arkansas State Parks
One Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-1191
www.ArkansasStateParks.com



Cossatot River State Park Natural Area is jointly managed with the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission.

Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
1500 Tower Building, 323 Center St.
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 324-9619
www.naturalheritage.com



NOTE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and supervision of your children are required while visiting these areas.

All plants and animals in the park are protected so that others may also enjoy them.