

**The Cossatot River Corridor** in the Ouachita Mountains is a cross-road of biological diversity where many plants exist together like nowhere else. Some plants, such as the Browne's waterleaf, are endemic, or only exist here, in the Ouachitas. More common species within the park have their "population center" located in the Ouachita Mountains. This diversity is what creates the scenic beauty that we enjoy. You may find all of the plants in this brochure and many more, as you explore the park.

### How Can You Help?

Management of the Cossatot River is driven by what is best for the health of the river and the people and wildlife it supports. You too can help preserve these plants for other visitors and future generations, by staying on the trails, picking up trash, and leaving plants where you find them. Instead, take a picture or make a drawing to share with others. Also, we are partners with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and ask our visitors to follow their seven principles for responsible recreation.

Currently, this brochure lists and describes only some of the rare plants known to occur in the park.



## Waterfall's sedge

*Carex latebracteata*

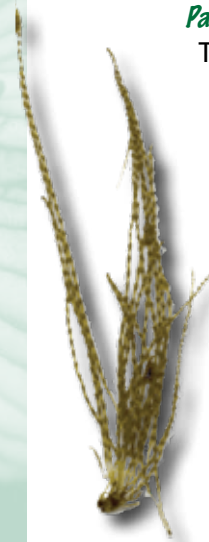
Waterfall's sedge grows in clumps in dry woods and open areas. The flower stem of this grass-like plant has three edges (of triangular shape). Its leaves and flower stem can grow to at least 13 inches. The actual flowers are hidden within green leaflike structures known as bracts. These bracts are around 1½ inch long and ¼ inch wide. It flowers from April through May and is endemic to the Ouachita Mountains.



## red algae

*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 appears 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.



## Georgia holly

*Ilex longipes*

Georgia holly is a large, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub which grows on rocky, well-drained, terraces and slopes. It is similar to the common and widespread reddish-orange fruited possumhaw or deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*), but the flower and fruit stalks of Georgia holly are longer and the fruits are more red. Georgia holly tends to grow in drier habitats. It is restricted in Arkansas to the southern portion of the Ouachita Mountains.



## Kentucky lady's slipper

*Cypripedium kentuckiense*

Kentucky lady's slipper occurs in moist low woods. This plant has a stout stem that reaches up to two feet in height with one to two showy flowers. Flowers have two twisted narrow petals on either side of an inflated petal called a "slipper" which is two to three inches long and pale yellow.



## Browne's waterleaf

*Hydrophyllum brownei*

Browne's waterleaf grows in deep shade of moist riparian 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.



## Ouachita bluet

*Houstonia ouachitana*

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.



## Ouachita indigo-bush

*Amorpha ouachitensis*

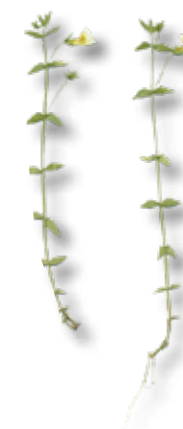
Ouachita indigo-bush, or Ouachita lead-plant, is a 3- to 6-foot-tall deciduous shrub with pinnately compound leaves that grows along rocky stream banks and terraces, and occasionally on rocky ridgetops. Its spikes of dark purple flowers with contrasting bright yellow-orange anthers occur in spring. It is endemic to the Interior Highlands of Arkansas and Oklahoma, primarily the Ouachita Mountains.



## sticky hedge hyssop

*Gratiola brevifolia*

The sticky hedge hyssop is 1 to 8 inches tall. The ½" tubular flowers are yellowish with fine dark lines running lengthwise on the lower ⅔ and are whitish on the upper ⅓. Flowering from July to August, it grows in bedrock along streams and rivers.



## Ouachita blazing star

*Liatris compacta*

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



close-up of flower head

## Letterman's ironweed

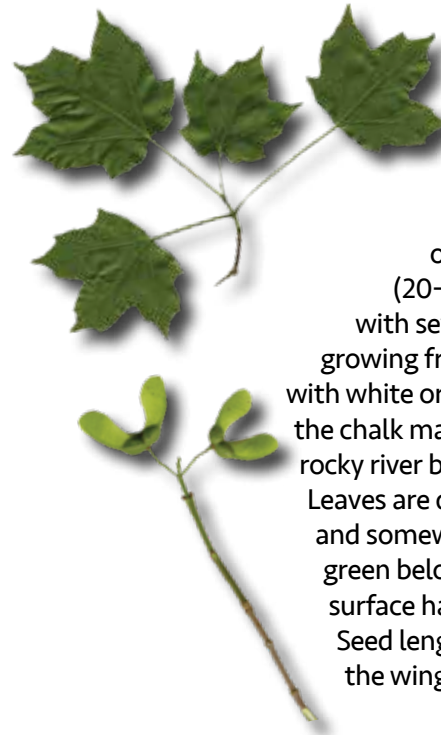
*Vernonia lettermannii*

Letterman's ironweed grows in gravel bars and in the cracks of rocks along streams. Many stems come up from one root.

Thirty stems per root is not uncommon.

The stems are crowded with very narrow leaves. Flowering from July to September, the purple to lavender-purple flowers provide

a spectacular display on the gravel bars. The Ouachita Mountains are the population center for this species.



## chalk maple

*Acer leucoderme*

Typically, a large shrub or small tree (20-40 feet tall) with several stems growing from the base with white or grayish bark, the chalk maple grows along rocky river banks and slopes. Leaves are dark green above and somewhat yellowish-green below. The lower surface has a velvety feel. Seed length (including the wing) is  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch.



## Ouachita twist flower

*Streptanthus squamiformis*

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.



Cossatot River State Park-Natural Area is jointly managed with the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. Park staff and Commission staff work cooperatively to inventory our flora and fauna. Available data suggests that these plant species in this brochure are of conservation concern in the state of Arkansas.

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If you would like to learn more about preserving the beauty and diversity of this area please see our ethics brochure or talk with the park interpreters about how you can help with the park's natural resource database.



Cover Photo: *Liatris compacta*  
(Ouachita blazing star)

10/2020

# RARE PLANTS of COSSATOT RIVER STATE PARK-NATURAL AREA

