

PITYOPSIS GRAMINIFOLIA
(Michx.) Nutt.
Silkgrass

FAMILY: Compositae (Asteraceae).

SYNONYMS: *Chrysopsis graminifolia* (Michx.) Ell.; *Heterotheca graminifolia* (Michx.) Shinnars

HABIT: Herbaceous, caespitose perennial with slender stoloniferous rhizomes, 3-9 dm.;
flowering September, October; fruiting October, November.

SIMILAR SPECIES: This flat-topped, yellow-flowered plant may be confused at a distance with
a goldenrod. It is rather distinctive close-up, however, and easily identified by a
combination of leaf and floral characters.

TOTAL RANGE: DE to s. OH, s. to FL, TX, and Mex.

STATE RANGE: There is a single post-1980 record from Adams County. There is a dubious
pre-1960 record from Scioto County.

HABITAT: Dry, sandy areas in full sun.

HAZARDS: Soil disturbance; overshadowing by woody species as a result of succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Known to be excellent in the proper soils. This plant can persist for
years, possibly by the stoloniferous rhizomes, under heavy mowing. The one known
population was not noticed for years in a heavily studied area until mowing ceased and
the plant had an opportunity to flower.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering material is needed for identification.

COMMENTS: There are many taxonomic problems concerning this genus. Ever since
Shinnars (1951), investigators have pointed out relationships of various species to either
Heterotheca or *Chrysopsis*, utilizing both morphological and cytological evidence. Many
of the morphological criteria are variable and apparently subject to environmental
control. Cytological and chemical data have recently shed evidence on possible
relationships, but as yet no firm consensus has emerged on the proper generic
relationship of this species.

Some authors also split this taxon into three varieties, of which the Ohio plants are the
typical variety. Given the general taxonomic confusion throughout this generic complex,
the taxon is treated herein as a single, variable entity.

This species is conspicuous when in flower, but otherwise is easily overlooked. It
should be sought throughout southern Ohio.

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Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

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