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Eryngium prostratum in Central Virginia

W. John Hayden

University of Richmond, jhayden@richmond.edu

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NOTES AND NEWS

Eryngium prostratum IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA—While visiting Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield County, Virginia during the fall of 1984, an unfamiliar blue-flowered plant was observed growing near the upper reaches of Swift Creek Lake. This proved to be *Eryngium prostratum* Nuttall ex DC., a species common near bodies of water in the southeast U.S. While several standard floras include Virginia in the distribution of this plant (Fernald 1950, Gleason 1952, Gleason & Cronquist 1963, Radford et al 1968, Godfrey & Wooten 1981), the only counties for which it is recorded in Harvill et al (1981) are along the extreme southern border of the state, i.e., Southampton, Sussex, Mecklenberg, and Pittsylvania Counties. Its presence in Chesterfield County thus represents a northward extension of its known range in the state of Virginia.

Virginia elements of *Eryngium prostratum*, with fruits obconic 0.6-0.9 mm long and only 0.5-0.6 mm thick, have been distinguished as var. *disjunctum* Fern. (Fernald 1945). However, the Pocahontas specimens possess shorter, subglobose fruits approximately 0.5 mm long and 1.0 mm wide and thus conform readily with typical *E. prostratum*.

Subsequent visits to Pocahontas State Park (late June 1985) have revealed *Eryngium prostratum* to be common along the banks of Swift Creek Lake and especially along the moist border of the area maintained as a lawn for several hundred meters north and south of the public boat launch. In such places it was associated with weeds such as *Juncus tenuis* Willd., *Paspalum* sp., *Polygonum aviculare* L., *Taraxacum officinale* Weber, *Plantago rugelii* Dcne., *Diodia virginiana* L., and *Hypericum mutilum* L. It was less frequent in regions where mowing did not reach quite to the water's edge; here it occurred with *Andropogon virginicus* L., *Dulichium arundinaceum* (L.) Britt., *Galium obtusum* Bigel., *Juncus effusus* L., and *Eupatorium perfoliatum* L., as well as a few of the aforementioned species. Woody vegetation near the shore included *Cephalanthus occidentalis* L. and *Alnus serrulata* (Ait.) Willd. Two small patches of this *Eryngium* have also been found near Beaver Lake, a dammed tributary of Swift Creek also in Pocahontas State Park. Here it was growing about 20 m from the shore in an area from which a number of Loblolly Pines have recently been harvested, rendering the site rather sunny in an otherwise dense second growth forest. It was present on the edge of the trail, restricted to spots where small springs reach the surface. Herbaceous associates here included *Selaginella apoda* (L.) Spring, *Juncus effusus*, *J. tenuis*, *Erechtites hieracifolia* (L.) Raf., *Smilax herbacea* L., *Gnaphalium purpureum* L., *Erigeron annuus* (L.) Pers., *Hypericum mutilum*, *Lactuca canadensis* L., and seedlings of *Typha latifolia* L.

Voucher specimens include *Hayden 1015, 1220, and 1244* deposited in the University of Richmond Herbarium (URV).—W. JOHN HAYDEN, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23173.

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