

***HEUCHERA HIRSUTICAULIS* (SAXIFRAGACEAE) OVERLOOKED IN THE LOUISIANA FLORA**

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ABSTRACT

A collection from Union Par., Louisiana, in 1969 documents the only known occurrence of *Heuchera hirsuticaulis* in the state. An attempt to relocate the plants in 2021 was unsuccessful.

Heuchera hirsuticaulis (Wheelock) Rydb. is a stable hybrid between *Heuchera americana* L. var. *americana* and *Heuchera richardsonii* R. Brown (Weakley 2020). It persists as a stable entity beyond the range of the parent taxa and is sometimes treated at specific rank for this reason (Gleason & Cronquist 1991; Weakley 2020; Wells & Shipps 2009; Ryan Folk, pers. comm). The plants are distinguished by densely hirsute petioles and larger (on average) hypanthia (Weakley 2020).

The native occurrence of *Heuchera hirsuticaulis* in Louisiana is documented here for Union Parish (Fig. 1), ca. 180 kilometers south of the nearest known record in Arkansas. Previous distribution summaries have excluded Louisiana (Wells & Shipps 2009; USDA, NRCS 2014; Weakley 2020).

Voucher. **Louisiana.** Union Par.: Woods beside paved road, 1.5 mi SW of Spencer, TRS: T20N R3E Sec 10, 17 Mar 1969, *Thomas 12917* (NLU, Fig. 2, now housed at LSU).

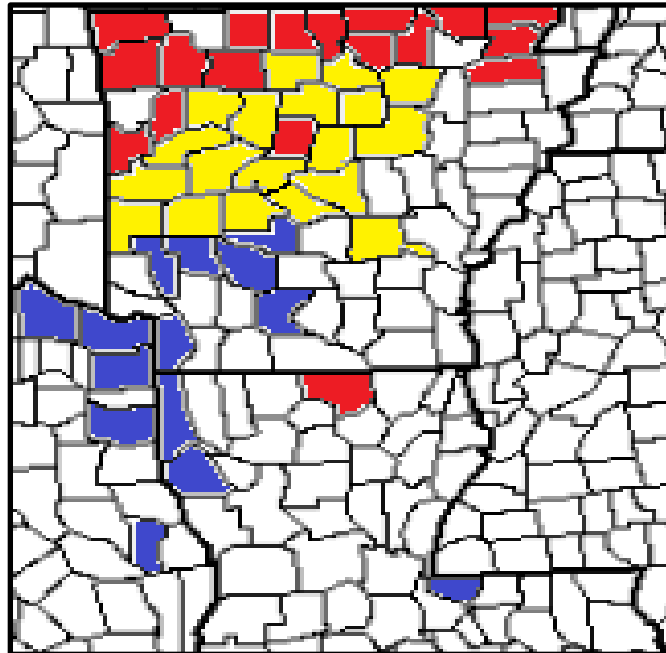


Figure 1. Distribution of counties with only *Heuchera americana* reported (blue), only *Heuchera hirsuticaulis* reported (red), and counties where both species are reported (yellow) in the region. Arkansas data from Gentry et. al (2013). Digitized specimens were reviewed for Texas, Louisiana, and Jefferson Co., Arkansas (SERNEC 2021).



Figure 2. *Heuchera hirsuticaulis* from Union Par., Louisiana. Thomas 12917 (NLU).

I encountered the Union Parish collection online while preparing a status assessment for *Heuchera americana*. Dr. Ryan Folk of MSU verified my identification. The collection notes are imprecise, but in early June 2021 I revisited the creek banks and narrowly forested corridors of the collection area. Aerial photos confirm the area has been badly degraded by pine plantation forestry in the last fifty years and I was unable to locate any individuals.

In Louisiana, *Heuchera americana* var. *americana* inhabits undisturbed bluffs, deep ravines, and low rises along loamy floodplains. The surrounding plant communities, often restricted to the unique terrain, are rich and have northern affinities, but they range from dry to mesic. *Heuchera hirsuticaulis* is expected to occur in similar habitats. The vegetation along the creeks at the collection site was a young, mesic, pine-hardwood community at the time of my visit. It seems likely *Heuchera hirsuticaulis* has been extirpated from the initial collection site, but intact habitats remain in the parish.

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