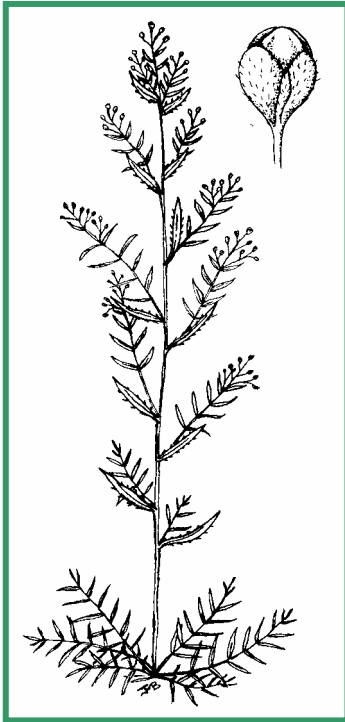
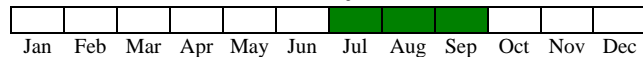


## *Lechea pulchella* Raf.

## Leggett's Pinweed



### Best Survey Period



**Legal status:** None in Canada. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada does not yet list this species. Threatened in Michigan.

**Global and provincial rank:** G5/S2

**Other Common names:** Pretty Pinweed

**Family:** Cistaceae. The rockrose family

**Total range:** Widespread from New England west through southern Ontario and Indiana to Minnesota and Nebraska, south through Delaware and Virginia to the coastal plains of Florida and Louisiana.

**Provincial distribution:** In Ontario it is found only on Walpole Island and in savannas in the

Windsor area of Essex County. It may be overlooked as it is fairly inconspicuous.

**Recognition:** Identification of Pinweed species is difficult. They are perennial herbs with one to a few erect stems with small leaves producing leafy panicles of numerous, minute flowers. Late in the season basal shoots with many crowded leaves may be produced, giving the appearance of a basal rosette. The tiny flowers are roundish or pear shaped with five sepals arranged in two whorls. The outer 2 sepals are very narrow to linear. The 3 inner sepals are wider and curved around the capsule. The petals are reddish and shorter than the sepals.

*L. pulchella* can be distinguished from other pinweeds by a combination of characters. It differs in general aspect from other species because of its longer (more than 5 cm), more

spreading branches giving almost the appearance of a grass panicle. Herbage is green, not white hairy. The leaves are narrow, about 4-8 mm long and end in a conical, shiny hard tip. The two outer sepals are distinctly shorter than the inner ones. The fruit is a globose capsule about 1.5 mm wide with 1-3 flattened to egg shaped seeds.

**Habitat:** *L. pulchella* is a plant of dry oak savannas and open woods on sandy soil.

**Biology:** Little information is available about the biology of this species. It is a perennial plant reproducing entirely by seed.

**Conservation/management:** This species is threatened by its rarity. Populations are subject to stochastic events. Because of its small size it can be quickly overgrown by taller species during natural succession in the absence of fire. Areas where it grows on Walpole Island are burned. It may be favoured by some disturbance as it is often found in small openings of bare sand.

**Comments:** This species was once known as *Lechea leggettii* Britton and Hollick in honour of William Henry Leggett (1816-82) a New York teacher and amateur botanist who was a co-founder of the Torrey Botanical Club and was the sole editor of the "*Torrey Botanical Bulletin*" from 1870 to 1880. However the older name of *pulchella*, which means "beautiful girl", given by Rafinesque takes precedence.

Recovery potential for this species is probably reasonably high, since it tolerates a certain amount of disturbance.

**Research needs:** Population sizes and dynamics have not been studied. Census and mapping of known populations and search for additional populations is needed. Critical habitat needs to be determined. Studies of seed production, viability and germination potential should be done.

**Related abstracts:** White Prairie Gentian.

**Selected references:**

Voss, E.G. 1985. Michigan Flora, Part II. Dicots (Sauraceae-Cornaceae). Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bulletin 59. Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. 724 pp.

Wilbur, R.L. 1966. Notes on Rafinesque's species of *Lechea* (Cistaceae). *Rhodora* 68: 192-208.

**Abstract citation:**

Bowles, J.M. 2004. Special plant abstract for *Lechea pulchella* Raf. (Leggett's Pinweed). Walpole Island Heritage Centre, ON and Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Lansing, MI. 2 pp.