

▣ Mature plant is usually less than 3' tall.

cobweb skipper
(*Hesperia metea*) x 1

Elliott's bluestem

Andropogon gyrans

Family: *Poaceae* **Genus:** *Andropogon* **Species:** *gyrans*
Average Height: 24 inches **Bloom Time:** August through October
Elevation Range: Lower elevations in Virginia. Infrequent to rare in the mountains.
Geologic/Soil Associations: Often associated with nutrient-poor, well-drained soils **Soil Drainage Class and Moisture Regime:** Moderately well-drained to well-drained; Somewhat xeric to mesic. **Light and Aspect:** Full sun to Part shade.

Habitat Associations: Remnant or emergent Piedmont Oak-Hickory Savanna, Piedmont Prairie, forest edges, and woodlands managed by fire. A conservative species requiring well-established soils and periodic natural disturbance, though often seen in higher quality grasslands in powerline rights-of-way.

Flora Associations: In forest edges and clearings on base-rich soils Elliott's bluestem is often joined by naked-flowered tick-trefoil (*Hylodesmum nudiflorum*) and small white snakeroot (*Ageratina aromatica*). Common associates in acidic and neutral soils include poverty oat grass (*Danthonia spicata*), broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), tick-trefoils (*Desmodium spp.*), bush-clovers (*Lespedeza spp.*), silverrod (*Solidago bicolor*), hairy thoroughwort (*Eupatorium pubescens*), and yellow false-indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*). In the Southern Piedmont at Fort Pickett, it is joined by the largest known population in the world of the globally rare shrub Michaux's sumac (*Rhus michauxii*). Generally speaking, *Andropogon gyrans* is a moderate indicator for healthy habitat, diversity, and rare species associations.

Fauna Associations: The warm coppery brown clumps of dried foliage provide shelter to many overwintering insects. Young foliage is browsed by deer and other hoofed mammalian herbivores. The foliage is also eaten by cobweb skipper caterpillars (*Hesperia metea*), leaf beetles such as *Chaetocnema denticulata*, leafhoppers like the handsome *Stirellus bicolor*, and important grassland species of grasshopper such as *Orphulella speciosa* (the slant-faced pasture grasshopper).

bluestem leafhopper (*Stirellus bicolor*) x 3.8

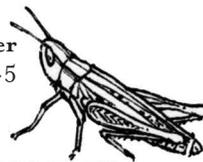
Many birds, including dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) and field sparrows (*Spizella pusilla*), eat the seeds.

Notes: Elliot's bluestem is associated with Prairie and Savanna communities, systems that likely occupied much of the Piedmont from the early Archaic Period (~10,000 years ago) right up until the time of European settlement. Now they are rare. Elliott's bluestem is tied to disturbances that are no longer common, including natural fires and large mammal herds. It does well where these old regimes are mimicked by prescribed burns and periodic mowing.

▣ Leaves are green and either pubescent (fuzzy) or smooth.

slant-faced pasture grasshopper
(*Orphulella speciosa*) x 1.5

American bison
(*Bison bison*) x 1/6



field sparrow
(*Spizella pusilla*)
x 0.5



▣ Upper culm (primary stem) sheaths distinctly broadened and strongly overlapping.

