

BEAUTIFUL PAWPAW

Deeringothamnus pulchellus Small

Synonyms: *Asimina pulchella* (Small) Rehder & Dayton

Family: Annonaceae (custard apple)

FNAI ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US—Endangered FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—FAC FL—UPL



Ann F. Johnson



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Low, deciduous **shrub** 8 - 12 inches tall, with 1 to several erect or arching **stems** from a taproot. **Leaves** alternate, leathery, oblong, 1 - 2.5 inches long, with veins visible on both upper and lower surfaces; **leaf tip** rounded or notched. **Flowers** fragrant, solitary on stalks arising in the angle between leaf and stem on new shoots of the season, blooming only after fire or disturbance; **petals** 6 - 10 per flower, 0.5 - 1 inch long, white, strap-shaped, curved backwards when fully opened; **sepals** 3, broadly triangular. **Fruit** 3 inches long, fleshy, green, resembling a lumpy bean pod, with dark brown seeds, about 0.5 inch long.

Similar Species: Pawpaws (*Asimina* spp.) have flowers with broad floppy petals in whorls of 3 or 4. Dwarf pawpaw (*Asimina pygmaea*) has closely spaced, overlapping leaves with pointed tips, 2.5 - 3 inches long. Netted pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*) has blue-green leaves with inrolled leaf margins and bears flowers on last year's shoots before new leaves appear.

Related Rare Species: See Rugel's pawpaw (*Deeringothamnus rugelii*) and four-petal pawpaw (*Asimina tetramera*) in this guide.

Beautiful pawpaw

Deeringothamnus pulchellus

Habitat: Open slash pine or longleaf pine flatwoods with wiregrass and dwarf live oak in the understory.

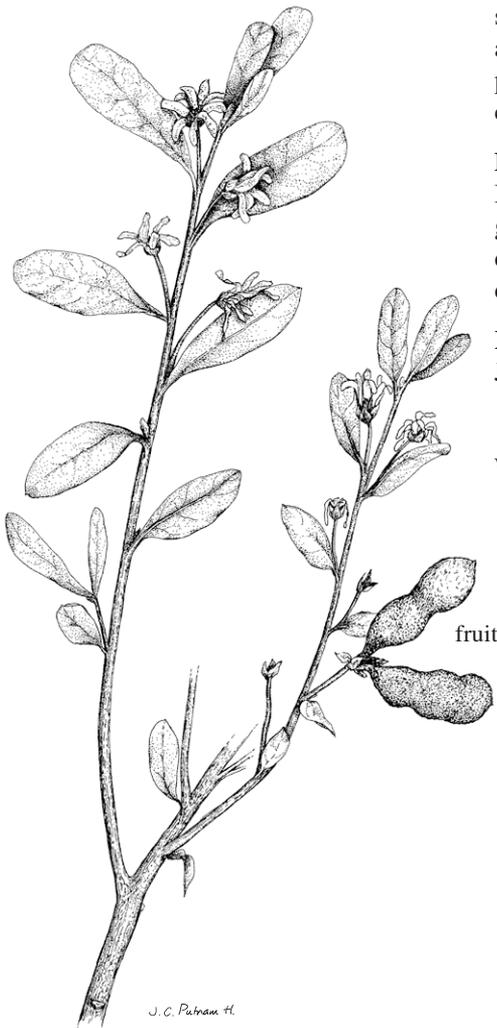
Best Survey Season: Flowers late March–April; will re-sprout and flower all year following fire. Most stems are annual, dying back in winter, but some occasionally survive for 2 years.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Charlotte and Lee counties, FL, with disjunct populations SE of Orlando in Orange County.

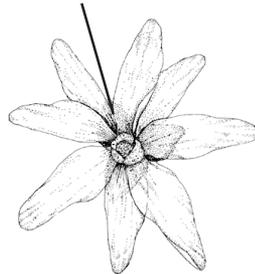
Conservation Status: Beautiful pawpaw is known from 28 sites with about 5000 plants; about half are protected on 2 preserves in Charlotte and Lee counties.

Protection & Management: Burn every 3 to 5 years in growing season; avoid disking or other soil disturbance.

References: Coile 2000, Johnson 1999, Kral 1960, Kral 1983, Small 1926a, USFWS 1998, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.



3 sepals (not visible from above in the field)



8 petals