BLODGETT'S SILVERBUSH
Argythamnia blodgettii (Torr.) Chapman
Synonyms: *Ditaxis blodgettii* (Torr. ex Chapm.) Pax; *Argythamnia argothamnoides* (Bertero ex Sprengel) J.W. Ingram
Family: Euphorbiaceae (spurge)
FNAI Ranks: G2/S2
Legal Status: US-Threatened FL-Endangered
Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL

Kim Allexander

Field Description: Erect **perennial** with a woody base and non-woody, often unbranched, green stems, to 2 feet tall. Stems and leaves are covered in fine hairs giving the plant a silvery-green appearance. **Leaves** 0.6 - 1.6 inches long and half as wide, evergreen, metallic blue-green, alternate, well spaced along the stem, entire or slightly toothed, oval to elliptic, hairy, with 3 main veins branching from the base. The leaves are often folded up along the middle vein. **Female and male flowers** borne on the same plant but in separate clusters in leaf axils, small with 5 sepals and 5 white, pointed petals. **Fruit** a green capsule in 3 parts, 1/8 to 3/16 inch wide, with round, patterned **seeds.**

Similar Species: Three-seeded mercury (*Acalypha* spp.) flowers lack petals and have leafy bracts beneath the flowers. Leaves of croton (*Croton* spp.) have silvery

scales, stalked glands, or star-shaped hairs.

Related Rare Species: See in this guide: milkbark (*Drypetes diversifolia*), maiden bush (*Savia bahamensis*), and manchineel (*Hippomane mancinella*).

Habitat: Sunny gaps and edges in pine rocklands, rockland hammocks, and coastal berms.

Best Survey Season: Flowers and fruits all year.

Range-wide Distribution: In Florida, present only in the Keys and Miami-Dade County. Its rangewide distribution extends to northern South America and adjacent islands.

Conservation Status: About 18 occurrences and fewer than 10,000 plants remain; most are in conservation areas but many of these are in need of additional protection and management.

Protection and Management: Use prescribed fire to maintain an open subcanopy and reduce litter. Eradicate exotic pest plants. Hand removal is preferred in the immediate areas surrounding wild mercury locations. Preserve remaining rocklands.

References: Bradley and Gann 1999, Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Nelson 1996, Small 1933, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.