

BLODGETT'S WILD-MERCURY

Argythamnia blodgettii (Torr. ex Champl.) Champl.

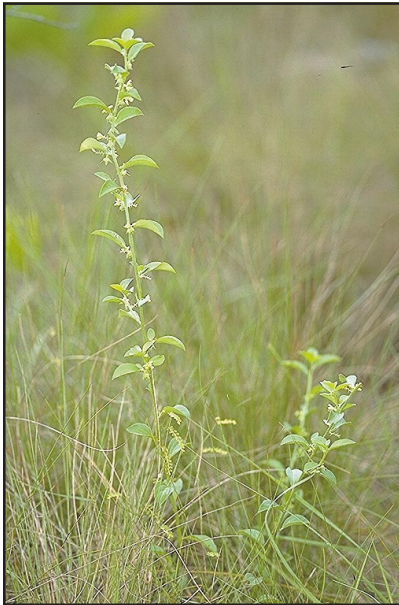
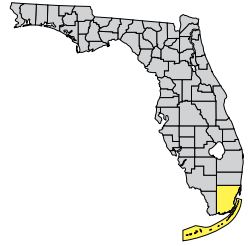
Synonym: *Ditaxis blodgettii* (Torr. ex Champl.) Pax

Family: Euphorbiaceae (spurge)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—UPL FL—UPL



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Erect **perennial** with a woody base and non-woody, often unbranched, green stems, to 2 feet tall. **Leaves** 0.6 - 1.6 inches long, ever-green, 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, often folded up along the midvein. **Female and male flowers** on same plant but in separate clusters in leaf axils, small with 5 sepals and 5 white petals. **Fruit** a 3-parted capsule 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: Other woody species in the spurge family found in south FL that are included in this guide are milkbark (*Drypetes diversifolia*), maiden bush (*Savia bahamensis*), and manchineel (*Hippomane mancinella*).

Blodgett's wild mercury

Argythamnia blodgettii

Habitat: Sunny gaps and edges in pine rockland, rockland hammock, and coastal berm.

Best Survey Season: Flowers and fruits all year.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Dade County and Monroe County Keys, FL.

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 & Management: Use prescribed fire to maintain an open subcanopy and reduce litter. Eradicate exotic pest plants. Preserve remaining rocklands.

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

