

FOUR-PETAL PAWPAW

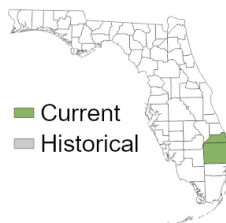
Asimina tetramera Small

Synonyms: *Pityothamnus tetramerus* (Small)
Small

Family: Annonaceae (custard apple)

FNAI Ranks: G1?/S1?

Legal Status: US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



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Field Description: Deciduous **shrub** 1.0 - 1.5 m tall, with one to several arching stems. **Leaves** 5 - 10 cm long, yellow-green, leathery, alternate, wider above the middle, with pointed tips, aromatic; network of veins visible on both upper and lower leaf surfaces; **leaves** all in the same plane, producing a frond-like branch. **Flowers** 1.3 - 2.5 cm across, nodding on long stalks in the angle between new leaves and the stem, foul-smelling; most flowers have 4 **sepals** and 4 or 6 maroon **petals**; if six petals, then the 3 outer **petals** are longer and paler than the inner. **Fruits** 5 - 9 cm long, lumpy and bean-shaped, with shiny, brown seeds 13 mm long.

Similar Species: Large-flowered pawpaw (*Asimina obovata*) has larger flowers and its leaves have rounded tips. Dwarf pawpaw (*Asimina pygmaea*) is less than 0.5 m tall and grows in moister conditions. Netted pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*) produces flowers on last year's shoots before new leaves emerge and has blueish-green leaves.

Related Rare Species: See Rugel's pawpaw (*Deeringothamnus rugelii*) and beautiful pawpaw (*Deeringothamnus pulchellus*) in this guide.

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Habitat: Openings in sand pine scrub on south-central Atlantic Coastal Ridge. Also in ecotones with scrubby flatwoods.

Best Survey Season: Spring; late March-June.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Martin and Palm Beach counties in SE FL.

Conservation Status: There are 9 extant or presumed extant occurrences in the coastal dune systems of Martin and northern Palm Beach Counties. Several documented occurrences have been extirpated due to development and this continues to threaten those populations that occur on private lands.

Protection and Management: Maintain open, lightly shaded scrub with controlled burns or chopping at 20 - 50 year intervals. Avoid disking or other soil disturbance. Purchase privately owned sites.

References: Coile 2000, Cox 1998, Kral 1960, Kral 1983, Small 1926b, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

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