

SPIKED WILD INDIGO

Baptisia albescens Small

Synonyms: none

Family: Fabaceae (pea)

FNAI Ranks: G4/S2S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-none



Flowers white; petioles short 5-10 mm long. Photo © Gary Fleming.

Field Description: Spiked wild indigo is a **perennial herb** that grows erect in dry open woodlands, flatwoods, and roadsides. **Stems:** One to several from a crown. Blue-green to gray-purple with a waxy coating, smooth. **Leaves:** Alternate. Petioles with small stipules at base. Divided into 3 elliptic leaflets with rounded tips. 1.3-6.4 mm long. **Flowers:** occurring in several long erect, terminal spikes extending above foliage; white or cream with yellow. **Fruits:** erect, yellowish-brown and leathery, narrowly cylindrical seed pod.

Similar Species: There are 9 species of wild indigo (*Baptisia*) in Florida. Two of these species have white flowers, spiked white indigo (*Baptisia albescens*) and wild white indigo (*Baptisia alba*). These two species can be differentiated by the calyx and corolla lengths. Spiked white indigo has a calyx 4.5-6.5 mm long and a corolla 13-16 mm long, while wild white indigo has a longer calyx 7-8 mm long and corolla 20-25 mm long. Additionally, the petioles of spiked wild indigo are 5-10mm long while wild white indigo petioles are 1-20 mm long.

spiked wild indigo

Baptisia albenscens

Related Rare Species: There are 8 other species of wild indigo (*Baptisia*) in Florida, 6 of these are rare including: Florida wild indigo (*Baptisia calycosa*), (*Baptisia elliptica*), hairy wild indigo (*Baptisia hirsuta*), Apalachicola wild indigo (*Baptisia megacarpa*), catbells (*Baptisia perfoliata*), and Occhlockonee wild indigo (*Baptisia riparia*); all of which do not have white flowers.

Habitat: Dry woodlands, pine flatwoods, and roadsides.

Best Survey Season: Flowering: May-Oct

Range-wide Distribution: Spiked wild indigo grows in dry woodlands, pine flatwoods, and roadsides in se VA through NC, SC, GA, n FL, e AL, and e TN.

Conservation Status: Spiked wild indigo can be found in the Florida panhandle in Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Gadsden, and Leon counties.

Protection and Management: Protect upland dry woodlands from conversion to urban, suburban, and agricultural uses. Implement a recurring fire regime to promote flower and fruit production.

References: Weakley 2022.



Flowers white; flowering pedicels 3-10 mm long. Photo © Alan Cressler