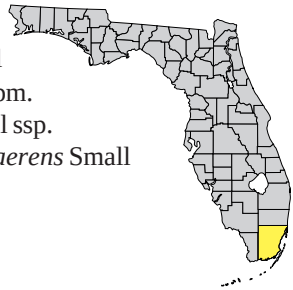
DELTOID SPURGE



Chamaesyce deltoidea (Engelm. ex Chapm.) Small
Synonyms: *Euphorbia deltoidea* Engelm. ex Chapm.
Chamaesyce deltoidea (Engelm. ex Chapm.) Small ssp. *adhaerens* (Small) A. Herndon; *Chamaesyce adhaerens* Small
Family: Euphorbiaceae (spurge)
FNAI Ranks: G2T1/S1
Legal Status: US–Endangered FL–Endangered
Wetland status: US–UPL FL–UPL

Gil Nelson

Field Description: Perennial **herb** with many wiry **stems** radiating from a taproot, forming mats or tufts up to 6 inches wide. **Leaves** 0.25 inch long, thick, rounded-triangular (deltoid), opposite, smooth or sometimes hairy below, bright green, with slightly rolled-under margins. **Flowers** solitary in leaf axils, in cup-like structures (**cyathia**), with tiny, petal-like glands. Plants of subspecies *deltoidea* with nearly hairless stems pressed to the ground and hairless fruit. Plants sometimes placed in subspecies *adhaerens* are erect or prostrate, with twisted stem hairs, and hairy fruit.

Similar Species: Several mat-forming spurges occur in south Florida pine rocklands. Deltoid spurge can usually be distinguished by its wiry stems and rounded-triangular leaves with entire, rolled-under margins, but use of a technical manual is recommended for identification.

Related Rare Species: *Chamaesyce deltoidea* ssp. *pinetorum* has erect stems and straight, spreading hairs (Dade County). *Chamaesyce deltoidea* ssp. *serpyllum* has hairy prostrate stems, twisted leaf hairs, and a silver-gray appearance (Monroe County Keys). All subspecies of deltoid spurge are rare and restricted to pine rocklands. Also see Porter's spurge (*Chamaesyce porteriana*) and Garber's spurge (*Chamaesyce garberi*) in this guide.

Deltoid spurge *Chamaesyce deltoidea*

Habitat: Pine rocklands with scattered shrubs and exposed limestone.

Best Survey Season: Flowers April–November, but can be identified all year.

Range-wide Distribution: Subspecies *deltoidea* is endemic to Dade County.

Conservation Status: Urban growth has reduced the range of deltoid spurge by 98%. Fewer than 20 sites are on public lands, and these are in dire need of ecological management. Fire suppression and exotic plants are major threats.

Protection & Management: Apply prescribed fire every 3 - 7 years to create a mosaic of rockland habitats and to reduce shrubs and leaf litter. Monitor population and habitat trends. Eradicate exotic pest plant species.

References: Burch 1966, Coile 2000, Herndon 1993, IRC 1999, Remus 1979, USFWS 1998, Webster 1967, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.