SOLDIERWOOD
Colubrina elliptica (Sw.) Briz. & Stern
Synonyms: none
Family: Rhamnaceae (buckthorn)
FNAI Ranks: G4/S2
Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered
Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL


Susan Sprunt

Field Description: Shrub or **small tree** up to 19 ft tall (rarely 32 ft) with young stems finely pubescent. **Leaves** ellilptic to ovate, 1.2-3.5 inches long, entire; 2-4 minute glands near the base of leaf margin. **Flowers** in densely pilose cymes; sepals to 0.08 inches long with petals shorter, yellowish or greenish yellow; peduncles 0.04-0.27 inches long. **Fruit** globose, 0.27-0.35 inches wide; orange-red to brownish.

Similar Species: Greenheart (*Colubrina arborescens*) has glossy upper leaf surfaces, with tomentose hairs along lower leaf veins; peduncles 0.2-0.39 inches long. Latherleaf (*Colubrina asiatica*), an invasive exotic species, has toothed leaf margins and 3 main conspicuous leaf veins.

Related Rare Species: Soldierwood is distinguished from two other state-endangered species by its nearly glabrous leaves and marginal glands on the lower

portion of leaf. Cuban snake-bark (*Colubrina cubensis var. floridana*) is distinguished by hairs on both leaf surfaces, its furrowed veins, and 6-12 secondary veins on either side of midvein running nearly straight and parallel. Greenheart (*Colubrina arborescens*) has rusty hairs on young twigs and veins of lower leaf surface. Both of these species occur in rockland hammocks in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Habitat: Rockland hammocks and disturbed uplands.

Best Survey Season: Flowers and fruits nearly all year; leaves are distinctive all year.

Range-wide Distribution: FL; West Indies; Mexico through Central America to n. South America (Venezuela).

Conservation Status: The species is known to occurr on Florida Keys WEA, and four other conservation sites.

Protection and Management: Preserve remaining rockland hammocks by purchase or conservation easement. Eradicate invasive exotic species from known locations.

References: Long and Lakela 1971, Weakley 2020, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011