

CUPANIA

Cupania glabra Sw.

Synonyms: *Cupania multijuga* A. Rich.;

Cupania excelsa Kunth

Family: Sapindaceae (soapberry)

FNAI Ranks: G4/S1

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Small **tree or shrub** to 40 feet tall, with smooth, splotchy, gray and brown bark. **Leaves** alternate, compound. **Leaflets** 2 - 6 inches long, 5 - 15 per leaf, alternate, oblong, coarsely toothed. **Flowers** white, in large, loose, much-branched clusters; **male and female flowers** usually on separate trees. **Fruit** a 3-lobed, leathery capsule.

Similar Species: Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), an invasive exotic shrub, has opposite toothed leaflets with a pungent smell. Carrotwood (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*), also an invasive exotic species, has swollen leaf stalks and usually an even number of smooth-margined leaflets. Soapberry (*Sapindus saponaria*) leaflets are opposite and connected by wings along the stalk.

Related Rare Species: Two other species in the soapberry family are included in

this guide: white ironwood (*Hypelate trifoliata*) and small-fruited varnishleaf (*Dodonaea elaeagnoides*).

Habitat: Tropical hammocks of the lower Keys.

Best Survey Season: Flowers October - November, fruits the following summer; leaves and bark are distinctive all year.

Range-wide Distribution: Monroe County Keys, FL; Jamaica, Cuba, West Indies.

Conservation Status: Found only in the Monroe County Keys, on the National Key Deer Refuge and Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge.

Protection and Management: Protect remaining tropical hammocks in the Keys from development; control exotic species invasion.

References: IRC 1999, Langeland and Burks 1998, Nelson 1996, Tomlinson 1980, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.