

COKER'S BEACH CREEPER

Ernodea cokeri Britt. ex Coker

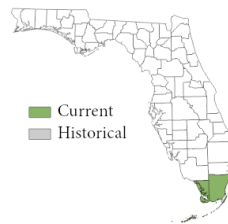
Synonyms: none

Family: Rubiaceae (coffee)

FNAI Ranks: G4Q/S1

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Prostrate **shrub** with slender, finely hairy, trailing **stems**. **Leaves** 0.6 - 1.6 inches long, clustered, opposite, simple, lacking leafstalks, narrow, linear, slightly curving, pointed, leathery and shiny, entire or toothed, with 1 main vein and prominent sheaths. **Flowers** small, orange, red, or pink, tubular with 4 strongly curling lobes, stamens and pistil extending beyond petals. **Fruits** oval, orange-yellow, with 4 persistent sepals.

Similar Species: Beach creeper (*Ernodea littoralis*) leaves are wider and have 3 or more prominent veins; flowers are white, pink, or yellow; it grows on dunes. Some species of false buttonweed (*Spermacoce* spp.) have similar leaves but are not woody. Also see pride-of-Big-Pine (*Strumpfia maritima*), a rare species included in this guide.

Related Rare Species: See in this guide: Bahama wild coffee (*Psychotria*

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ligustrifolia), princewood (*Exostema caribaeum*), and small-flowered lilythorn (*Catesbaea parviflora*).

Habitat: Disturbed hammocks and pine rocklands.

Best Survey Season: Flowers all year, primarily December - February; leaves are distinctive all year.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, West Indies, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras.

Conservation Status: Only 3 populations are known in FL, all on conservation areas, in Dade County and Monroe County Keys (National Key Deer Refuge).

Protection and Management: Purchase pine rocklands and manage for conservation. Use fire to create a mosaic of habitats. Control exotic species.

References: Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, IRC 1999, Negron-Ortiz and Hickey 1996, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.