

## DELTOID SPURGE

*Euphorbia deltoidea* ssp. *deltoidea* Engelm. ex Chapman

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Euphorbiaceae (spurge)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2T1/S2

**Legal Status:** US-Endangered FL-Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US-none+ FL-UPL



Whole plant. © Robert Gundy

**Field Description:** **Stems** prostrate, densely mat-forming, glabrous or very sparsely hairy, hairs appressed, uncinuate, 0.1–0.2 mm. **Stipules** glabrous or sparsely hairy with appressed uncinuate hairs; petiole glabrous or sparsely hairy with appressed uncinuate hairs; blade 2–4.5 × 2–4.5 mm, as long as wide, abaxial surface reddish, adaxial surface bright green, surfaces glabrous or sparsely hairy with appressed uncinuate hairs. **Involucre** glabrous or sparsely hairy with appressed uncinuate hairs. **Pistillate flowers:** ovary glabrous or sparsely hairy with appressed uncinuate hairs. **Capsules** glabrous or sparsely hairy with appressed uncinuate hairs.

**Similar Species:** There are many species of spurge (*Euphorbia* sp.) that are prostrate or mat-forming but they are noticeably different from this species. The most similar species are the related subspecies: pineland spurge (*Euphorbia deltoidea* ssp. *pinetorum*), wedge spurge (*E. deltoidea* ssp. *serpyllum*) and Gould's

## deltoid spurge

*Euphorbia deltoidea* ssp. *deltoidea*

wedge sandmat (*E. deltoidea* ssp. *adhaerens*).

**Related Rare Species:** Three other rare subspecies of deltoid spurge (*Euphorbia deltoidea*) occur in south Florida pine rocklands: pinelands spurge (*E. deltoidea* ssp. *pinetorum*) with erect stems, leaves and stems villous-hirsute, hairs straight and spreading, 0.6–0.7 mm; leaf blades silver-green; wedge spurge (*E. deltoidea* ssp. *serpyllum*) with stems prostrate, leaves and stems canescent, hairs less than 0.1 mm; leaf blades 2 times longer than wide and silver-green; Gould's wedge sandmat (*E. deltoidea* ssp. *adhaerens*) with erect or prostrate stems, leaves and stems villous, hairs uncinata or irregularly twisted, 0.2–0.5 mm; leaf blades as long as wide and green (FNA 2016).

**Habitat:** Pine rocklands.

**Best Survey Season:** Flowering and fruiting year-round.

**Range-wide Distribution:** This subspecies is endemic to south Miami-Dade County in south Florida.

**Conservation Status:** All of the occurrences are protected on conservation lands and are receiving active management, through prescribed fire treatment and invasive plant species removal. However, it is important to remember the difficulty of applying prescribed fire at the appropriate intervals within a highly fragmented and densely populated area. This contributes to the ongoing threat of succession to rockland hammock, even on protected lands.

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

**References:** Flora of North America (FNA) 2016, Robertson, W. B. 1953, URS, IRC, and Muller 2007, Wade et al. 1980, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2023, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011

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*Euphorbia deltoidea* ssp. *deltoidea*



Flower (~2 mm). © Robert Gundy