

GODFREY'S SWAMPPRIVET

Forestiera godfreyi L.C. Anders.

Synonyms: none

Family: Oleaceae (olive)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Photos by Gary Knight

Field Description: Deciduous **shrub or small tree**, 2.4 - 4.9 m tall, main **stems** arching or leaning. **Leaves** 5.1 - 7.6 cm long, opposite, simple, oval, margins toothed above the middle, uniformly hairy on under surface. **Leaf stalks and twigs** hairy. **Male and female flowers** on separate plants. **Male flowers** (see photo) borne in clusters of 12 - 15, each flower with 3 - 5 showy stamens, 4 - 5 very tiny sepals, and no petals; each male flower cluster surrounded by 4 small and 2 tiny pale yellow bracts. **Female flowers** in clusters of 5 - 10, each flower with 1 pistil, 2 - 4 non-functional stamens, and 6 small bracts. Flower clusters are held close to the stem and may appear to be a single, 4-petaled flower. **Fruits** are waxy and dark blue.

Similar Species: Swamp privet (*Forestiera acuminata*) occurs in wetlands, and has pointed leaf tips, small teeth all along the leaf margins, and leaf blades hairless beneath except along the veins. Upland privet (*Forestiera ligustrina*), which occurs in similar habitats to Godfrey's swampprivet, has small teeth all along the leaf margins, nearly hairless leaf stalks, and two lines of hairs on the twigs. All other native privets flower later than Godfrey's swampprivet.

Godfrey's swampprivet

Forestiera godfreyi

Related Rare Species: Florida pineywood privet (*Forestiera segregata* var. *pinetorum*) occurs on shell mounds and in pine rocklands in S FL.

Habitat: Upland hardwood forests with limestone at or near the surface, often on slopes above lakes and rivers.

Best Survey Season: Flowers mid-January to mid-February, fruits present through May. Leaves may be recognized through the summer.

Range-wide Distribution: N FL and SE SC.

Conservation Status: Eleven of Florida's 15 occurrences are protected on parks or preserves. Godfrey's privet is threatened by invasion of Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) and other invasive exotic shrubs.

Protection and Management: Avoid logging or other mechanical clearing in upland hardwood forests. Control invasive exotic species.

References: Anderson 1985, Coile 2000, Foote and Jones 1989, Godfrey 1988, Nelson 1996, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.

