

## BAHAMA MAIDENBUSH

*Heterosavia bahamensis* (Britton) Petra Hoffm.

**Synonyms:** *Savia apiculata* Urban; *Savia bahamensis* Britt.

**Family:** Phyllanthaceae (leaf-flower)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S2

**Legal Status:** US-none; FL-Endangered



Gil Nelson

**Field Description:** **Shrub or small tree** to 2 - 4 m tall with erect branches. **Leaves** 2 - 4.5 cm long, alternate, simple, entire, oval to oblong, leathery, glossy, evergreen, often blotched with brown or purple, with conspicuously netted veins and a pale midvein; large brown **stipules** at base of leaf stalk. **Male and female flowers** small, with 5 greenish-white petals, on separate branches of the same plant; **male flowers** in dense clusters; **female flowers** usually solitary. **Fruit** a round, 3-parted capsule.

**Similar Species:** Many tropical shrubs in south Florida, such as coco-plum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*), have alternate, entire, oval leaves; Bahama maidenbush is distinguished by large brown stipules, erect branches, and conspicuous veins.

**Related Rare Species:** Several woody spurge species are rare in Florida. See in this guide: manchineel (*Hippomane mancinella*), milkbark (*Drypetes diversifolia*), and Blodgett's wild mercury (*Argythamnia blodgettii*).

**Habitat:** Coastal thickets, pine rocklands, margins of tropical hammocks, disturbed coastal areas.

## Bahama maidenbush

## *Heterosavia bahamensis*

**Best Survey Season:** Spring-summer; March - June.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Dade County and Monroe County Keys, FL; Bahamas, Cuba, Caicos Islands, Cayman Islands, Jamaica.

**Conservation Status:** Bahama maiden-bush is found in 7 preserves, primarily in the lower Keys.

**Protection and Management:** Eradicate exotic pest plants. Protect hammocks and pine rocklands from development.

**References:** Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, IRC 2000, Nelson 1996, Tomlinson 1980, Webster 1967, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

