

## FLORIDA LANTANA

*Lantana depressa* var. *depressa* Small

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Verbenaceae (vervain)

**FNAI Ranks:** G2T1/S1

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



Note all-yellow flowers. © Robert Gundy

**Field Description:** Low, mat-forming **shrub**. **Leaves** 5 cm long, 2.5 cm wide, opposite, oval to lance-shaped, toothed, with wedge-shaped bases, blades folded up along the midvein. **Flowers** bright yellow-gold but fade to orange with age (photo, lower right), 15 - 20 flowers in dense, flat-topped clusters. **Fruit** fleshy, shiny black.

**Similar Species:** The common, exotic landscape lantana (*Lantana strigocamara*) has squared-off leaf bases, orange or multi-colored flower heads, and thorny, erect branches. Landscape cultivars such as "Lantana Gold" and "Gold Rush" resemble the native varieties but are of uncertain parentage and should not be considered native. Button sage (*Lantana involucrata*) has white, yellow-centered flowers and yellowish stems.

**Related Rare Species:** Two yellow-flowered varieties of Florida lantana are similar except for growth form: Gulf Coast Florida lantana (*Lantana depressa* var. *sanibelensis*) has erect branches to 0.9 - 2.7 m tall. Atlantic Coast Florida lantana (*Lantana depressa* var. *floridana*) has lax or arching stems to 1.8 m tall.

## Florida lantana

## *Lantana depressa* var. *depressa*

**Habitat:** Pine rocklands and vacant lots of southern Dade County, especially Everglades keys.

**Best Survey Season:** All year.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Florida lantana: endemic to Dade County, FL. Gulf Coast Florida lantana: endemic to SW coast of FL. Atlantic Coast Florida lantana: endemic to SE coast of FL.

**Conservation Status:** Although found on many conservation areas, all 3 varieties are threatened by exotic species invasion and by "genetic swamping" through hybridization with *Lantana camara*.

**Protection and Management:** Control all instances of cultivated *Lantana* species on conservation lands with priority to conservation lands hosting *Lantana depressa* var. *depressa*. Avoid ground disturbance which can favor the establishment of invasive plants. Apply prescribed fire during the growing season every 3-7 years in pine rockland habitat (FNAI 2010a, Possley et al. 2018, URS Corporation et al. 2007). Applying prescribed fire several months after the treatment of invasive plants can increase the effectiveness of the treatment.

**References:** Coile 2000, Hammer 1997, IRC 1999, Nelson 1996, Sanders 1987, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

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