

ATLANTIC COAST FLORIDA LANTANA

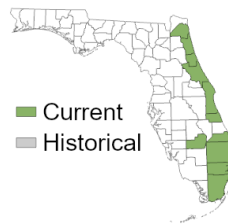
Lantana depressa var. *floridana* Small

Synonyms: none

Family: Verbenaceae (vervain)

FNAI Ranks: G2T1T2/S1S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered



Flowers primarily orange; leaves folded at margin. Growing in mesic flatwoods with remnant marl prairie at Okaloacoochee Slough Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Rounded **shrubs** approaching 2 m tall, with the central axis somewhat developed but not prominent, **leaves** 3-6 cm long, branches +/- spreading-arching, stem hairs 0.5-1 mm long, corolla limbs 8-10 mm wide; **inflorescence axes** are clavate-thickened and spongy; **inflorescence bracts** lanceolate; **drupes** bluish-black and juicy when ripe (Weakley et al. 2023).

Similar Species: The common, exotic landscape lantana (*Lantana strigocamara*) has squared-off leaf bases, orange or multi-colored flower heads, and thorny, erect branches. Button sage (*Lantana involucrata*) has white, yellow-centered flowers and yellowish stems.

Related Rare Species: Similar to two other varieties of Florida lantana (*Lantana depressa* var. *depressa*) is a low, mounded shrub, rarely taller than 0.3 m, with prostrate to spreading stems and leaves 1-3 cm long; Gulf Coast Florida lantana (*Lantana depressa* var. *sanibelensis*) is a pyramidal shrub with an erect and prominent central axis, upper branches stiffly ascending, lower branches somewhat decumbent and stem hairs 1-1.5 mm long; corolla limbs

Atlantic Coast Florida *lantana*

Lantana depressa var. *floridana*

6-8 mm wide.

Habitat: Stabilized dunes of the Atlantic coast barrier islands and relictual dunes of central Florida, also pine flatwoods and xeric hammocks.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Native from extreme se. GA and ne. FL south to se. FL.

Conservation Status: All three varieties are threatened by exotic species invasion and by "genetic swamping" through hybridization with the non-native invasive species common lantana (*Lantana strigocamara*). Atlantic Coast Florida *lantana* is ranked as critically imperiled to imperiled.

Protection and Management: Treat occurrences of the FISC Category 1 invasive species, common lantana (*Lantana strigocamara*), apply prescribed fire at appropriate intervals within fire dependent communities, and avoid mechanical disturbance of habitat.

References: Sanders, R. W. 1987, Weakley et al. 2023, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011



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