

## SOUTHERN CRABAPPLE

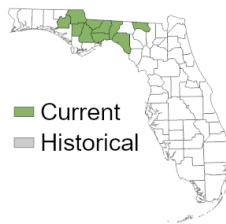
*Malus angustifolia* (Ait.) Michx.

**Synonyms:** *Pyrus angustifolia* Ait.; *Malus angustifolia* (Ait.) Michx. var. *angustifolia*

**Family:** Rosaceae (rose)

**FNAI Ranks:** G5?/SNR

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



Armed with sharp spur branches. Upland pine at L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

**Field Description:** A **shrub** to small **tree** (approximately 5 m tall) with branches and twigs thorny; **leaves** folded (conduplicate) in bud, glabrous or nearly so and often lobed on vigorous shoots; elliptic to elliptic-lanceolate, 2.5 - 8 cm long, 1 - 4 cm wide, mostly greater than 2 times as long as wide, subacute to obtuse at the tip; **pedicels** and hypanthium glabrous or with scattered long hairs; **sepals** persistent when in fruit; **fruit** 20 - 35 mm wide.

**Similar Species:** Florida bully (*Sideroxylon reclinatum* ssp. *reclinatum*) is superficially similar but is easily differentiated by its often tightly clumping leaves on spur shoots, inconspicuous axillary flowers in early summer, nearly glabrous, obovate, finely reticulate leaves and a typically small shrubby form with spiny branches.

**Related Rare Species:** Southern crabapple is quite distinctive in its appearance, even as a small shrub, and is not likely to be mistaken with any other rare woody shrub or small tree in Florida.

## southern crabapple

*Malus angustifolia*

**Habitat:** Occurs in upland pine, upland mixed woodland, and dry, often calcareous hammocks.

**Best Survey Season:** Flowering April - May; fruiting (May) August - September.

**Range-wide Distribution:** NJ, PA, OH, southern IL, and southeastern. MO, south to northern peninsular FL, Panhandle FL, and eastern TX.

**Conservation Status:** The species appears to be sporadic in protected upland pine and upland mixed woodland communities, with some remnant occurrences on private land roadsides.

**Protection and Management:** Maintain appropriate fire return intervals in upland pine (1 - 3 years) and upland mixed woodland (2 - 20 years) communities. Though tolerant of some degree of shade, individuals seem to flower and fruit better in communities with an open woodland aspect.

**References:** Weakley, A. S. and Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.



Leaves much longer than wide. Armed with sharp spur branches. Upland pine at L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Leaved elliptic, often lobed on vigorous shoots. Upland pine at L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Growing in upland pine at L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.