

FLORIDA SPINY-POD

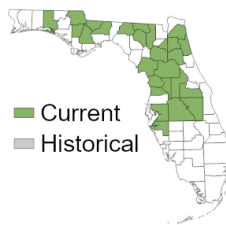
Matelea floridana (Vail) Woods.

Synonyms: none

Family: Apocynaceae (dogbane)

FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Distinguished by flower color which ranges from garnet to purple. Taken at Andrews Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Field Description: Perennial, twining vine with large, opposite, leaves with cordate bases. Plants exude a milky sap when injured. Flowers are produced in axillary clusters. Petals are a maroon color, and flowers have a black corona. Fruits are spiny follicles that split open to release seeds with tufts of hair that allow them to be carried away on the wind.

Similar Species: Florida spiny-pod is distinguished from the similar angle pod (*Gonolobus suberosus*) by its fruit capsules with fleshy protuberances (spines) and solid color flowers throughout. Vegetative plants of *Matelea* and *Gonolobus* are difficult to distinguish, but Florida spiny-pod can be distinguished from angle pod by having odorless leaves. Angle pod is described by some as having an odor similar to burnt popcorn. Smaller leaves may also resemble the invasive skunkvine (*Paederia foetida*), but are easily distinguished by their odorless crushed leaves

Florida spiny-pod

Matelea floridana

Related Rare Species: All *Matelea* species are state-listed in FL. Florida spiny-pod has purple-black flowers. See Alabama spiny pod (*Matelea alabamensis*), state-endangered, in the field guide.

Habitat: Sandhill, upland pine, and dry hammocks.

Best Survey Season: Flowers late spring-summer (fruits present in fall).

Range-wide Distribution: Near endemic to Florida (a single occurrence known from Georgia).

Conservation Status: 52 populations are reported, including 3 that are historic; about 45 populations are in conservation areas.

Protection and Management: Ecotones to hardwood hammocks should be kept open with fire, and hammocks should be protected from canopy disturbance and rooting by feral hogs. Since reproductive individuals are more likely to be found along trails where they may receive more sunlight, care should be taken while maintaining vehicle and foot trails to avoid damage to these plants.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin 1982, Clewell 1985.



Distinguished by flower color which ranges from garnet to purple. Taken at Andrews Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Fruit with scattered, small spines, not winged. Taken at Andrews Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



A scrambling vine with finely hairy heart-shaped leaves and stems. Taken at Andrews Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.