SIMPSON'S STOPPER
Myrcianthes fragrans (Sw.) McVaugh
Synonyms: none
Family: Myrtaceae (myrtle)
FNAI Ranks: G4/S4
Legal Status: US-none FL-Threatened
Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL

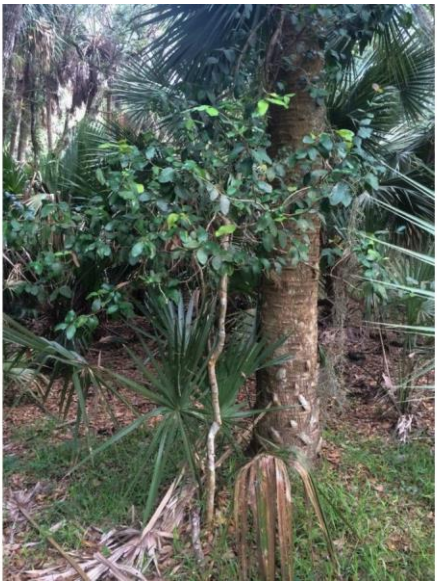


Photo taken by Kim Alexander.

Field Description: Shrub to small tree with reddish, smooth, exfoliating bark. Leaves opposite, small, punctate with glandular, dark-colored dots, fragrant when crushed. Flowers are fragrant and white with four petals and a tuft of stamens. Fruit is a small, red berry.

Similar Species: Simpson's stopper is distinguished from *Eugenia* species by glandular, slightly raised punctate dots on its leaves.

Related Rare Species: Differentiated from *Eugenia* species by having glandular, slightly raised punctate dots on its leaves.

Habitat: Mostly coastal hammocks, rarely inland. Often found growing near wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*) and *Citrus* spp. trees, mostly in hammocks.

Best Survey Season: Flowering mainly April - June, but possible throughout the

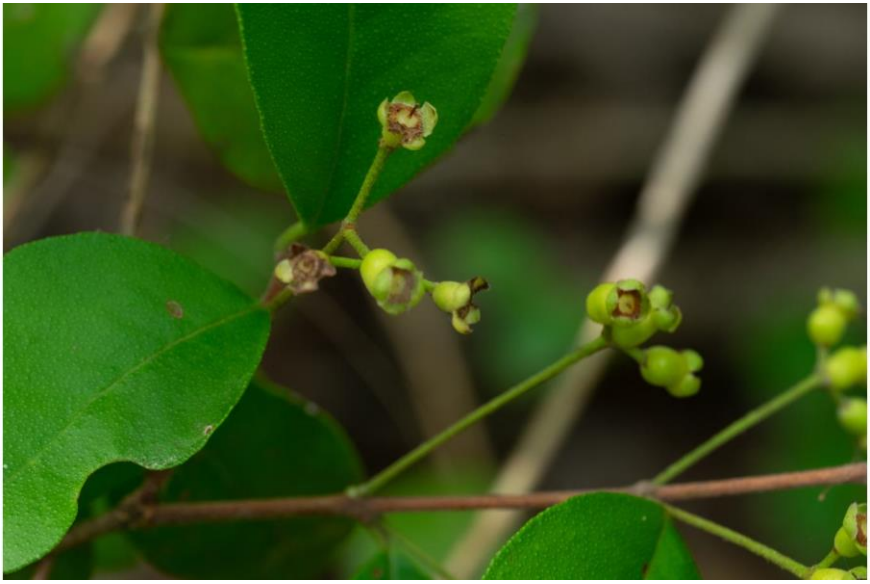
year.

Range-wide Distribution: West Indies, Mexico, Central America and South America. In Florida, found along the east coast north to St. John's County and along the west coast north to Lee County.

Conservation Status: Listed state-threatened, this species is vouchered from 20 counties of the Florida peninsula. It can be a common component of lightly disturbed to undisturbed subtropical hammocks in south FL.

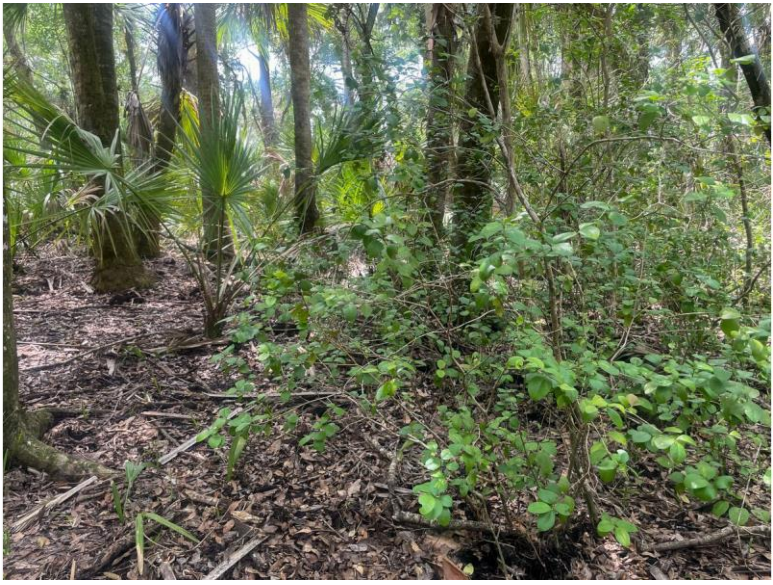
Protection and Management: Soil disturbances from free-ranging animals can disturb soils and promote the establishment of invasive exotic plant species that may ultimately out-compete rare species such as Simpson's stopper. Examples include old world climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolia*), and guava (*Psidium guajava*). Simpson's stopper is not a fire-adapted shrub. While fires may reach the edge of a hammock community, saturated soils and humid conditions in the hammock typically limit the extent of a burn. Periodic burns in adjoining flatwoods communities can reduce woody encroachment and lessen the likelihood of fires spreading into hammocks. Monitor hammocks for invasive species and initiate appropriate control measures for each exotic species where needed.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin 1982, Little 1979.



Evident bumpy leaf surfaces with opposite leaf arrangement; immature fruit on long pedicels. Photo taken at Salt Lake WMA by Kelly Anderson.

Opposite leaf arrangement; immature fruit on long pedicels. Photo taken at Salt Lake WMA by Kelly Anderson.



Growing in hydric hammock with mixed hardwood canopy. Photo taken at Salt

Lake WMA by Kelly Anderson.