

## WILD SWEET BASIL

*Ocimum campechianum* P. Mill.

**Synonyms:** *Ocimum micranthum* Willd.

**Family:** Lamiaceae (mint)

**FNAI Ranks:** GNR/S2

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



Flowers petals dark purple, 4 - 5 mm long. Photo © Joey Santore.

**Field Description:** Annual **herb** to 1 m tall; **Calyx** with 5 lobes, clearly separate apically, with the upper lobe expanded and “cap-like”; calyx short stipitate-glandular at throat (non-annulate), lower lobes setaceous; **corolla** purplish, 4 - 5 mm long, barely exerted beyond calyx, lower lobe nearly entire, puberulent, non-annulate; **anthers** greater than 1 mm long; mericarps red-brown, weakly mucilaginous or not.

**Similar Species:** Wild sweet basil is a distinctive member of the mint family in south Florida.

**Related Rare Species:** There are no other closely related rare species in Florida.

**Habitat:** Rockland hammocks and pine rocklands.

**Best Survey Season:** All year.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Southern peninsular FL; West Indies; Mexico, Central America, and South America.

**wild sweet basil**

*Ocimum campechianum*

**Conservation Status:** The extant occurrences for this species all occur on Big Pine Key. They are protected within Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge, where they occur within Keys cactus barren and pine rockland habitats.

**Protection and Management:** Prescribed fire should be applied at the appropriate return intervals (3-7 years) within the pine rockland community.

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



Stems four sided; leaves serrate. Photo © Joey Santore.