

## SCRUB PLUM

*Prunus geniculata* Harper

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Rosaceae (rose)

**FNAI Ranks:** G3/S3

**Legal Status:** US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



Billy B. Boothe



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**Field Description:** **Shrub** to 1.8 m tall (usually much shorter) with a broad, densely branched crown and gnarled, partially buried trunk. Young **twigs** shiny reddish-brown and strongly zig-zag; **branches** with spiny tips. **Leaves** about 2.5 cm long, with tiny gland-tipped teeth; deciduous; leaves clustered on short spur shoots or widely spaced on branches. **Flowers** small, with 5 white petals, clustered at ends of short shoots or scattered on branches; bud scales cover many of the flower stalks so that most flowers appear to lack stalks. **Fruit** small, oval, reddish.

**Similar Species:** Other species of plum, such as chickasaw plum (*Prunus angustifolia*), have obviously stalked flowers and straight twigs. Hog plum (*Ximenia americana*) has yellow fruit, straight twigs, and thorns only in the angles of leaf and stem. Scrub ziziphus (*Ziziphus celata*) has entire leaf margins and yellow fruit. Buckthorns (*Sideroxylon* or *Bumelia* spp.) have thorns and clustered leaves but densely hairy leaves or twigs.

**Related Rare Species:** None in FL.

**Habitat:** Sandhills, scrub and turkey oak barrens.

**scrub plum**

*Prunus geniculata*

**Best Survey Season:** Flowers January - February before leaves appear, fruits March - May. Leaves or twigs are fairly distinctive all year.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Endemic to central FL.

**Conservation Status:** More than 100 populations are known from at least 11 conservation areas.

**Protection and Management:** Purchase and protect remaining fragments of scrub habitat. Use prescribed fire to create sunny openings.

**References:** Coile 2000, Harper 1911b, Kral 1983, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

