

SCRUB ZIZIPHUS

Pseudoziziphus celata (Judd & D.W. Hall)

Hauenschild

Synonyms: *Ziziphus celata* Judd & Hall

Family: Rhamnaceae (buckthorn)

FNAI Ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



Field Description: **Shrub** with zigzag branches and short, straight, thorn-tipped twigs. **Leaves** less than 2.5 cm long, deciduous, alternate, leathery, hairless, often clustered on short shoots; usually wider above the middle, with rounded or notched tips and entire margins. **Flowers** tiny, with 5 white, narrow petals, and 5 showy, yellow-green sepals (occasionally 3 or 4 petals and sepals), clustered on short shoots. **Fruits** yellow, 1.3 - 2 cm long.

Similar Species: Scrub plum (*Prunus geniculata*) has thorns and zigzag stems but finely toothed leaf margins (see detailed description in this guide). Hog plum (*Ximenia americana*) has clustered leaves and yellow fruits, but thorns are in leaf axils and branches are straight. Several species of buckthorn (*Sideroxylon* spp.) are found in Lake Wales Ridge habitats; these shrubs have thorns but densely hairy leaves or twigs.

Related Rare Species: See Cuban snake-bark (*Colubrina cubensis* var. *floridana*) in this guide.

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Habitat: Oak-hickory scrub, scrubby flatwoods, or sandhills on yellow sand.

Best Survey Season: Flowers late December - February, fruits May - June; leaves and stems are distinctive spring - fall.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to the Lake Wales Ridge in Polk and Highlands counties, FL.

Conservation Status: Five populations are known, one protected on public lands, another by conservation agreement.

Protection and Management: Fence populations to prevent grazing and trampling; burn every few years to stimulate reproduction and new growth; avoid chopping or disking and frequent mowing; eradicate exotic species. Continue to propagate new plants.

References: Coile 2000, DeLaney et al. 1989, Godt et al. 1996, Judd and Hall 1984, Nelson 1996, Race 1998, USFWS 1998, Weekley et al. 1999, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

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