

NIGHTFLOWERING WILD PETUNIA

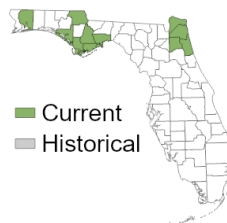
Ruellia noctiflora (Nees) Gray

Synonyms: *Ruellia tubiflora* Leconte

Family: Acanthaceae (acanthus)

FNAI Ranks: G3?/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered



Field Description: Perennial herb with slender, hairy, purplish stems to 16 inches tall. **Leaves** to 2.8 inches long, opposite, oval with bluntly pointed tips, and very short or no leaf stalks. **Flowers** white, with 5 spreading **petals** more than 3 inches across; **tube and throat** more than 3 inches long; **sepals** 1.5 inches long, very narrow. **Flowers** open at night and fall off by mid-morning. **Fruit** a cylindrical capsule, 1 - 1.5 inches long, sepals persisting as fruit develops.

Similar Species: Common species of *Ruellia* in FL lack the long flower stalks and leafy bracts.

Related Rare Species: Pineland wild petunia (*Ruellia pedunculata* ssp. *pinetorum*) is a branched herb with long flower stalks, leafy bracts and long, narrow sepals just below the purple flowers.

Habitat: Wet flatwoods, seepage slopes, and hydric hammocks.

Best Survey Season: Summer-fall; May - August.

nightflowering wild petunia

Ruellia noctiflora

Range-wide Distribution: FL, GA west to MS

Conservation Status: The major threat that this species faces throughout its range is fire suppression. Other threats include land-use conversion, habitat fragmentation, forest management practices, and succession.

Protection and Management: Burn pine flatwoods and seepage slopes every 2 - 3 years. Avoid soil-disturbing activities such as plowing fire lanes and bedding.

References: Coile 2000, Fernald 1945, Godfrey and Wooten 1981, Long 1970, Radford et al. 1968, Schotz 2004, Southern Appalachian Species Viability Project 2002, Tobe et al. 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.