

YELLOWWOOD

Schaefferia frutescens Jacq.

Synonyms: none

Family: Celastraceae (bittersweet)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



No Image
Available

Field Description: A slow-growing, evergreen shrub or small tree to 20 feet (higher in rare instances), with small, wart-like clusters of bud scales on the branches, which become light gray-beige as they age. Thin, ovate or elliptical leaves are on $\frac{1}{4}$ inch petioles, to a length of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches and a width of $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch, and have margins slightly rolled under. The axillary, greenish, stalked flowers are $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch across and have 4 petals and sepals, with male flowers occurring in clusters of 3 to 5, and female flowers either solitary or in clusters of 2 to 3. The fruits, remaining on the tree for a long time (a year in some instances), are $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, red-orange drupes with a bony pit enclosing 2 seeds.

Similar Species: *Schaefferia frutescens* differs from the other genera in this family by being a tree or shrub with alternate leaves and entire leaf margins, fruit is a drupe and has four sepals, petals and stamens.

yellowwood

Schaefferia frutescens

Related Rare Species: Maidenberry (*Crossopetalum rhacoma*), state-endangered, somewhat resembles yellowwood. It has red flowers and fruits, and leaves mostly opposite (sometimes alternate or whorled) with notched tips and toothed margins. It occurs in pine rocklands and hammocks. False boxwood (*Gyminda latifolia*), state-endangered, also somewhat resembles yellowwood. Unlike maidenberry, this species has either a bluish-black fruit or a capsule, with 4-angled branchlets. It occurs in rockland hammocks and coastal berms in South Florida.

Habitat: Rockland hammocks and hammock borders.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: South Florida, the West Indies, Mexico, Central and South America.

Conservation Status: Protected in various conservation areas along the Florida Keys.

Protection and Management: Threatened primarily by habitat destruction.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Little 1979.