

THORNE'S BUCKTHORN

Sideroxylon thornei (Cronq.) T.D. Pennington

Synonyms: *Bumelia thornei* Cronq.

Family: Sapotaceae (sapodilla)

FNAI Ranks: G3/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Field Description: Thorny **shrub or small tree** usually up to 2.4 m tall, rarely to 4.5 m. **Leaves** variable in size and shape, between 1.3 - 7.6 cm long, with rounded or bluntly pointed tips and smooth or slightly wavy margins; under-surface of leaves densely tawny-hairy in spring, patchily hairy by late summer; **leaf stalks** always hairy; some **leaves** produced on crowded **spur shoots**. **Flowers** white with 5 petals. **Fruit** a black berry, about 13 mm long.

Similar Species: Woolly buckthorn (*Sideroxylon lanuginosum*) has densely hairy twigs and leaves, but prefers dry upland habitats. Smooth buckthorn (*Sideroxylon reclinatum*) is a much-branched shrub with small leaves and fruits less than 13 mm; its leaf stalks are hairless by mid-summer. Hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.) found in FL wetlands have toothed or lobed leaves.

Related Rare Species: Apalachicola buckthorn (*Sideroxylon lycioides*), state-endangered, is a shrub or small tree with scaly bark, long-pointed leaves, and thorny, zig-zag twigs.

Habitat: Floodplain forests, wetlands, and borders of cypress swamps where water may pond during part of the year.

Thorne's buckthorn

Sideroxylon thornei

Best Survey Season: Spring; May-June. Best surveyed when in fruit, August - October.

Range-wide Distribution: Georgia, Alabama, and six counties in panhandle Florida.

Conservation Status: Seven populations occur in FL, 4 in conservation areas.

Protection and Management: Avoid logging swamps, floodplains, stream banks, and hardwood slopes. Avoid drastic hydrologic changes in streams and rivers.

References: Anderson 1996, Anderson 1988, Coile 2000, Godfrey 1988, Nelson 1996, Patrick et al. 1995, Pennington 1990, Tobe et al. 1998, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

