

Picayune Invasive Plant Field Guide

By Maureen S. Bonness

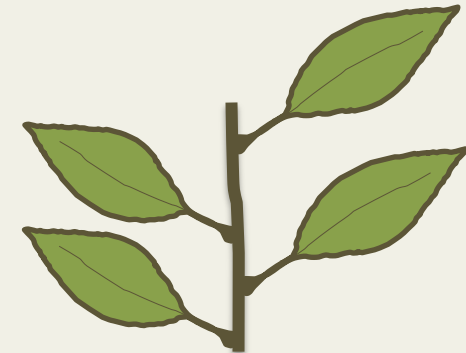
November 2022

Part S – Shrubs (and shrub-like)

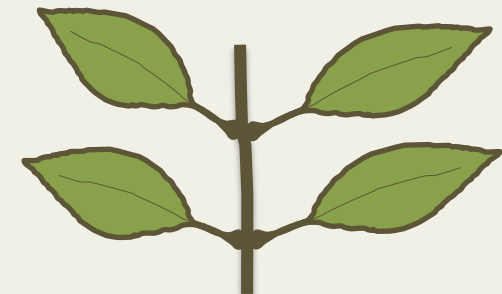
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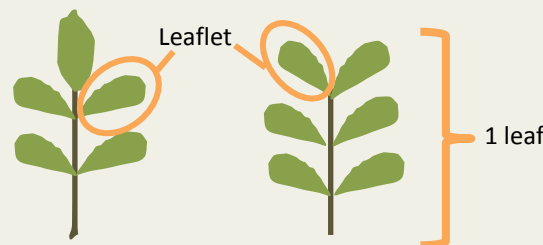


Alternate leaf arrangement



Opposite leaf arrangement

Leaves are paired on opposite sides of the stem



**Pinnate compound leaves
(1x divided)**

Lantana strigocamara

(formerly *Lantana camara*)

Lantana

FISC (FLEPPC): Category I.

Plant family: Verbenaceae (vervain family).

Snapshot: Shrub with square stems and drops leaves in winter.

Vegetative recognition: Shrub to 6 ft tall. Stems are square, light-colored, with memorable prickles. Leaves are opposite, to 6 inches long, and have many rounded teeth along edges. Crushed leaves have a strong lemon/medicine odor (very helpful for ID if there are no flowers).

Flowering recognition: Flowers are in umbrella-like showy clusters. There is much variation in petal color, from pale yellow to brilliant orange/red.

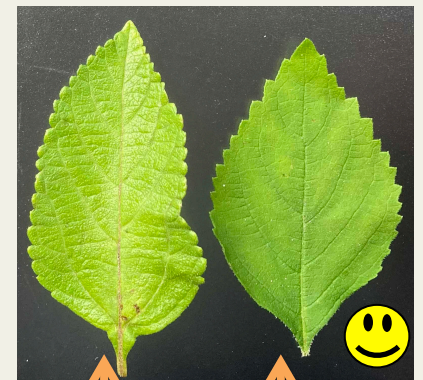
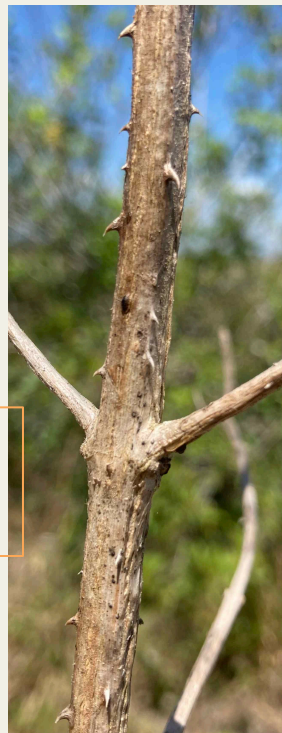
Flowering period: All year.

Habitat: Pinelands, disturbed uplands. Leaves are frost-sensitive.

Look-a-likes: *Callicarpa americana*, “beauty berry”, native



Lantana stems are square and have prickles. Branches are opposite.



Lantana vs beauty berry: Leaves look very similar. Both species have opposite leaves and grow in uplands. But, lantana has square stems, and lantana crushed leaves smell like lemon/medicine.

Ludwigia peruviana Peruvian primrosewillow

FISC (FLEPPC): Category I.

Plant family: Onagraceae (evening primrose family).

Snapshot: Large shrub with fuzzy leaves and large yellow flowers.

Vegetative recognition: Shrub that can develop many branches and grow to over 10 ft tall.

Older stems can be woody with peeling bark. Leaves and younger stems have fine velvet hair. Leaves are oval-shaped, up to 6 inches long.

Flowering recognition: Large (2-inches) bright yellow flowers with 4 wide petals.

Flowering period: All year.

Habitat: Swamps, pond margins, ditches. Leaves are sensitive to frost.

Invasive comments: Hand-pulled stems can regrow if they contact the ground.

Look-a-likes: *Ludwigia octovalvis*, "Mexican primrosewillow", native, see next page.



More photos
on next page.

Ludwigia octovalvis vs *Ludwigia peruviana*

Native

To ~6 ft

Stems, leaves usually smooth-ish

Invasive

To 10 ft tall

Leaves & young stems hairy

A large *L. octovalvis* plant can look very similar to a small *L. peruviana* plant. Both species grow in the same habitat and grow side-by-side.

Best to look at flowers for ID.

L. octovalvis flowers are up to 1.5-inches wide.

L. peruviana flowers are 2 inches wide

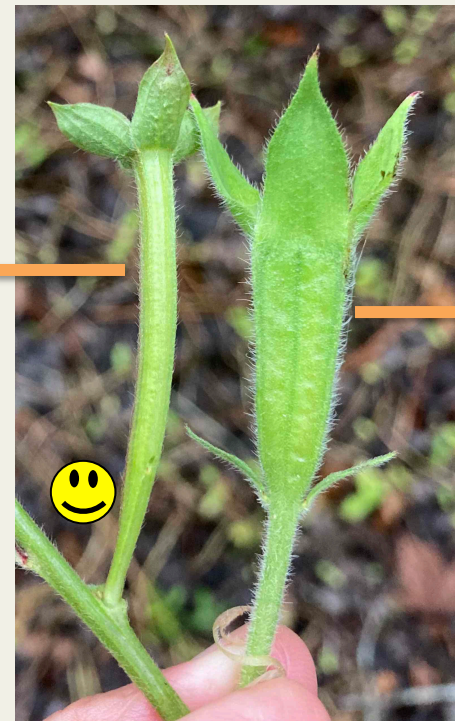


L. octovalvis

L. peruviana

L. octovalvis flower base (ovary) is very long and very narrow.

L. peruviana flower base (ovary) is long and wide (cone-shaped).



Rhodomyrtus tomentosa

Downy rose-myrtle

FLEPPC: Category I.

Plant family: Myrtaceae (myrtle family).

Snapshot: Shrub with distinctive vein pattern.

Vegetative recognition: Shrub to 6 ft tall. Leaves are opposite, oval, to 3 inches long, with whitish hairs on under side and smooth edges that roll under. Leaves have a distinctive vein pattern: veins occur parallel to each leaf edge, giving the appearance of “a leaf within a leaf”.

Flowering recognition: Bright pink flower are 1 inch wide, with 5 petals forming a cup cradling many anthers.

Flowering period: Spring.

Habitat: Pinelands and other moist forests.

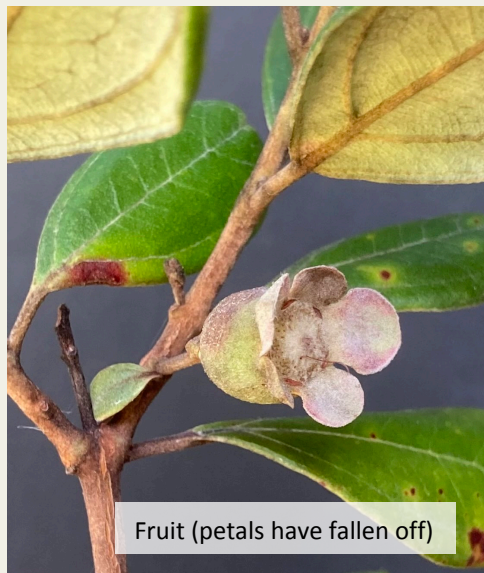
Invasive comment: Low branches bend to ground (sometimes underneath leaf litter), then grow laterally and develop roots.

“leaf-within-a-leaf”
vein pattern

Leaf edges roll under



opposite leaves



Fruit (petals have fallen off)

Schinus terebinthefolia Brazilian pepper

FISC (FLEPPC): Category I.

Plant family: Anacardiaceae (poison ivy family).

Snapshot: Shrub with many red berries.

Vegetative recognition: Many-branched, dense shrub to over 30 ft tall. Branches are very long. Leaves are 1x-compound with 3-9 leaflets. Leaflets are 1-2 inches long, and leaflet edges can be smooth or toothed. Crushed leaves smell like pepper. Some people get skin rashes from this plant.

Flowering recognition: Small white flowers are in clusters near leaf bases, mostly near branch tips. Berries are small, red, and abundant.

Flowering/fruiting period: Mostly fall – winter.

Habitat: Most habitats, except deep wetlands, marl prairies, and marl cypress scrub.

Look-a-likes: *Ilex cassine*, “dahoon holly”, native, has red berries similar to Brazilian pepper, but dahoon holly plants have simple (not dissected) leaves.



Dahoon holly has simple (not dissected) leaves.

Seedlings have fewer and smaller leaflets, that have jagged toothed leaflet edges.



Senna pendula

Valamuerto, Christmas senna

FISC (FLEPPC): Category I.

Plant family: Fabaceae (bean family).

Snapshot: Sprawling shrub that clanders on other plants.

Vegetative recognition: Stems are long, weak, and droop if not entwined into nearby support. Leaves are compound with 3-6 pairs of leaflets with round tips and a gland between leaflets.

Flowering recognition: Flowers with 5 bright gold petals are abundant around Christmas time. Bean pods, 4-8 inches long, dangle on branches.

Flowering period: Fall – winter.

Habitat: Variable. Tolerates flooding.

Look-a-likes: see next 2 pages for more *Senna* species.



A "mess of stems" is typical



Senna species

Picayune *Senna* species have similar flowers (not useful for ID).
Leaf and fruit shapes are the primary ID characters.

SFWMD Picayune Invasive Plant Field Guide page S.8

Senna alata, “candlestick plant”

Not Native, **can be invasive**



Senna alata is a shrub to 15 ft tall.



Senna alata leaves can be huge, to 30 inches long; 6-12 pairs of leaflets that have rounded tips



Senna alata pods have 4 ridges lengthwise.

Senna occidentalis, “septicweed”

Not Native, **can be invasive**



S. occidentalis is a slender shrub to 6 ft tall; 3-7 pairs of leaflets that have pointy tips. Stinky smell when damaged.

S. occidentalis has long cylindric pods that are straight or slightly curved upward

S. occidentalis has a round gland at base of leaf – not between leaflets



Senna species

Picayune *Senna* species have similar flowers (not useful for ID).
Leaf and fruit shapes are the primary ID characters.

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Senna ligustrina, "privet senna"

NATIVE



Senna ligustrina is a shrub to 8 ft tall; grows in hammocks;
flowers during fall - spring



S. ligustrina has 6-10 pairs of
pointy, shiny leaflets



Senna ligustrina pods are flat

Senna obtusifolia, "sicklepod"

Unknown if Native or not. Populations can explode.



Senna occidentalis is an herb,
usually <2 ft tall; most likely found
in disturbed uplands.
Pods look like curved rods when
green; become square-ish when
ripe.

Senna obtusifolia has a rod-
shaped gland between leaflets



Senna obtusifolia leaflets are rounded;
only 2-3 pairs of leaflets,

Solanum diphyllum Two-leaf nightshade

FISC (FLEPPC): Category II.

Plant family: Solanaceae (tomato family).

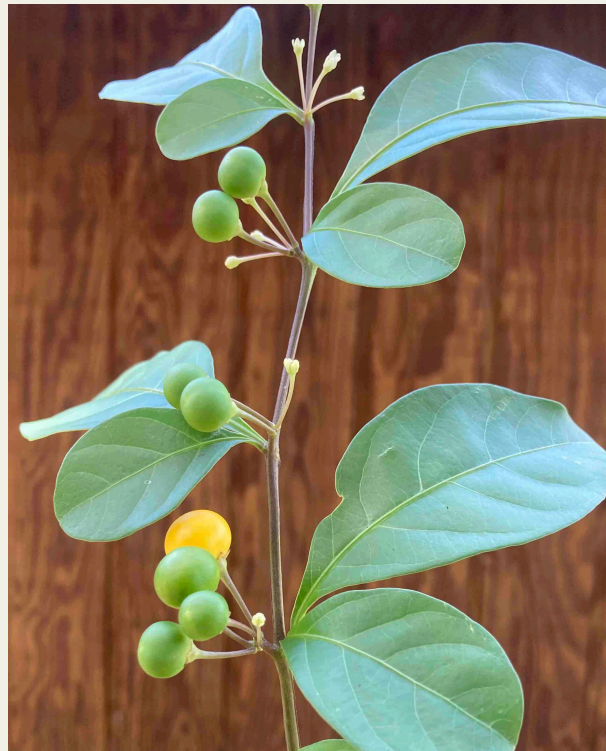
Snapshot: Shrub or small tree, to 6 ft tall

Vegetative recognition: For mature plants, leaves are arranged with a pair of leaves next to each other, with one leaf smaller than the other. Younger plants (photo at right) don't have the "odd couple" leaf pattern. Leaves are shiny, not hairy, wider near the leaf tip, with a long narrowing leaf base. Leaves are up to 3 inches long and have a distinctive (musty?) odor.

Flowering recognition: Flowers, in small clusters at the base of leaves, are tiny and not noticeable. Fruits are round berries, the size of a marble, that turn yellow when ripe.

Flowering period: all year.

Habitat: Disturbed sites. Can tolerate a bit of flooding.



Younger plants (at the stage when they can still be hand-pulled) don't have the "odd-couple" leaf pattern.

Two leaf: one major and one minor leaf develop from a single leaf bud. The minor leaf can be much smaller. Flowers and fruit develop opposite the leaf pair.

Photographic credits

Jean McCollom: *Rhodomirtus tomentosa* flower

Maureen S. Bonness: all other photos

Resources

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<https://newfleppc.bugwoodcloud.org/index.cfm> Florida Invasive Species Council (formerly FL Exotic Pest Plant Council).

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