

Common Weeds That Can Interfere with Establishment, Sustainability, and Aesthetics of Wildflower Plantings

Potential sites for wildflowers should not be considered when the occurrence of any weeds listed below is anything but very sparse.^{1, 2} These weeds will substantially reduce the likelihood of an aesthetically pleasing planting, or its establishment or sustainability. For example, tall weeds like dogfennel and ragweed can easily grow through a dense stand of shorter wildflowers like black-eyed susan or tickseed and make the planting look unsightly. Weeds like Florida betony or Mexican clover will hinder establishment as well as re-seeding because these weeds can form a dense groundcover that is difficult to eradicate. Vines and vine-like plants can affect aesthetics when they grow up through the wildflowers and spread out over the canopy of wildflowers.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Dogfennel	<i>Eupatorium capillifolium</i>
Fiddlers Spurge	<i>Poinsettia heterophylla</i>
Florida Betony	<i>Stachys floridana</i>
Horseweed, Maretail	<i>Conyza canadensis</i>
Mexican Clover, Mexican Tea	<i>Richardia</i> spp.
Nutsedges: Yellow and Purple	<i>Cyperus esculentus</i> / <i>Cyperus rotundus</i>
Ragweed: Common	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>
Ragweed: Giant	<i>Ambrosia trifida</i>
Torpedograss	<i>Panicum repens</i>
Tropical Bushmint	<i>Cantinoa mutabilis</i> (<i>Hyptis mutabilis</i>)
Vaseygrass	<i>Paspalum urvillei</i>
Vine and Vine-Like Plants	
Dewberry	<i>Rubus</i> spp.
Greenbrier	<i>Smilax</i> spp.

In cases where these weeds are very sparse, and the site is otherwise suitable for wildflowers, eradicate these weeds during site preparation. And be vigilant thereafter; as with all weeds, these are most effectively controlled while they are young and are not flowering.

Starting on page 2, details about each species is provided, including links to information and photos to aid in identification and management of these weeds. Two publications to consult when determining management practices for any weed are:

- A Guide for Roadside Vegetation Management
[http://www.dot.state.fl.us/statemaintenanceoffice/RDW/DOT%20Final%20\(3\)Turf%20Management%20Guide%20UF.pdf](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/statemaintenanceoffice/RDW/DOT%20Final%20(3)Turf%20Management%20Guide%20UF.pdf)
- Herbicide Options for Weed Management in the North Carolina Highway Wildflower Program
<https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/RNAProjDocs/2005-09FinalReport.pdf>

¹ Avoid any site where Category I invasive species occur.

² Most of these weeds occur statewide.

Dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*)

Type	Broadleaf; native
Life cycle	Perennial
Height	5 to 8+ ft
Flowers	Tiny; whitish. Very late summer, fall
Reproduction	Seeds, roots
Soil moisture	Moist to slightly dry
Notes	Can form dense thickets; foliage has strong odor when crushed



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=821>

Dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*): Biology and Control

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/AG/AG23300.pdf>

Roadside Vegetation Field Condition Study

http://www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center/Completed_Proj/Summary_MNT/FDOT_BDK75_977-36_rpt.pdf

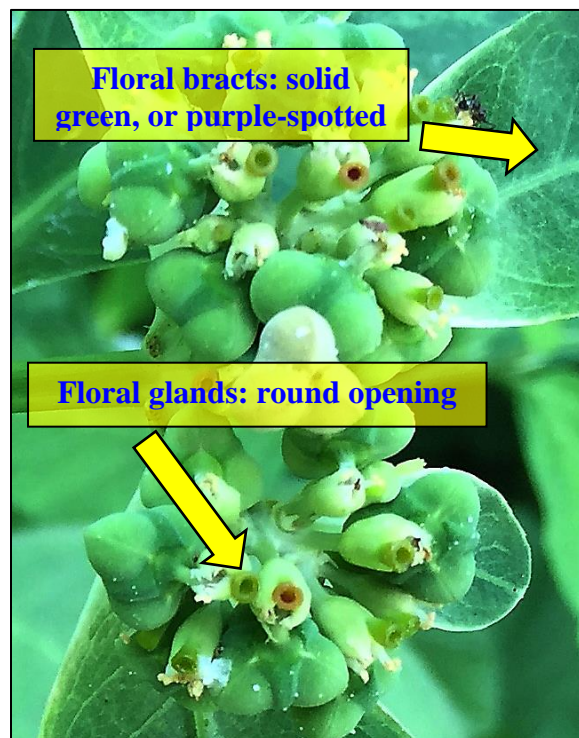
Fiddler's Spurge (*Poinsettia* [*Euphorbia*] *heterophylla*)

Type Broadleaf; native
Life cycle Annual
Height 2 to 3 ft
Flowers Greenish; bracts green or purple-spotted. Any time of year

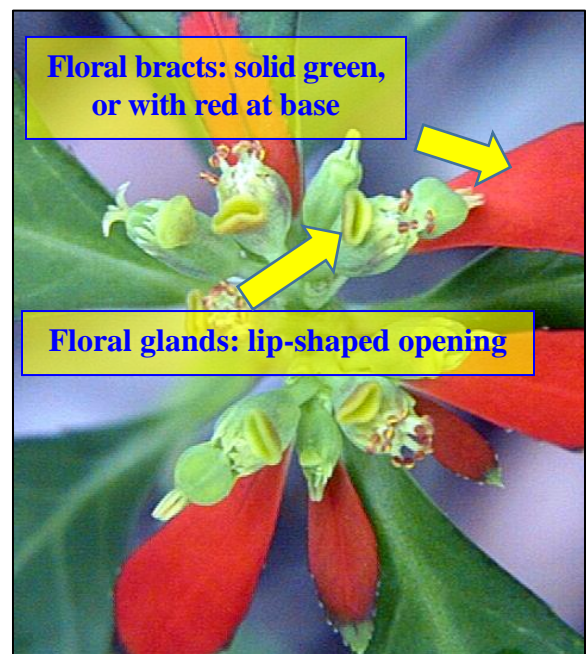
Reproduction Seeds

Soil moisture Dry to moist

Notes Can form dense populations. The best ways to distinguish this species from the closely related painted leaf (*Poinsettia cyathophora*) are 1) Floral glands: fiddler's spurge – urn-shaped with round opening; Painted Leaf – urn-shaped with narrow, lip-shaped opening; 2) Floral bracts: fiddler's spurge – solid green or purple-spotted, never red at base; painted leaf – solid green, or red at base. Both species have sticky, milky sap (latex) like the common holiday season poinsettia.



Fiddler's Spurge (*Poinsettia heterophylla*)



Painted Leaf (*Poinsettia cyathophora*)

Fiddler's Spurge (*Poinsettia* [*Euphorbia*] *heterophylla*) continued

Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=5276>

Euphorbia heterophylla (wild poinsettia)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/23313>

Wild poinsettia (*Euphorbia heterophylla*): an emerging weed in cotton and processing tomato in Greece

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276086545_Wild_poinsettia_Euphorbia_heterophylla_An_emerging_weed_in_cotton_and_processing_tomato_in_Greece

Wild poinsettia (*Euphorbia heterophylla*) germination and emergence

http://www.jstor.org/stable/4045608?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Preemergence Herbicides for Use in Ornamentals

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/wg/wg05800.pdf>

Florida Betony (*Stachys floridana*)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Perennial
<i>Height</i>	6 to 10 inches
<i>Flowers</i>	Pinkish purple. Spring, summer
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, rhizomes, tubers
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly moist
<i>Notes</i>	Can form dense colonies; foliage may be reddish purple in winter; mint family; also called rattlesnake weed because the large white tubers resemble a rattlesnake rattle.



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=2015>

Florida Betony Biology and Management in Turf

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EP/EP38800.pdf>

Horseweed, Maretail (*Conyza canadensis*)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Annual
<i>Height</i>	3 to 4 ½ ft
<i>Flowers</i>	Tiny, white daisy-like flowers. Summer
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Slightly moist to dry
<i>Notes</i>	Resistance to glyphosate reported



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=8856>

Horseweed

<http://rcrec-onc.ifas.ufl.edu/weed-science/weed-id/horseweed.shtml>

Conyza canadensis (Canadian fleabane)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/15251>

Weed Management in Pastures and Rangeland–2016

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FILES/WG/WG00600.pdf>

Ecology and Management of Canadian Horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*)

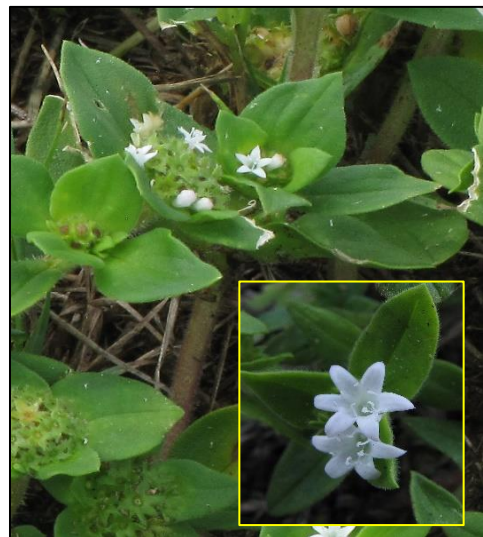
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANTMATERIALS/publications/idpmctn11471.pdf

Biology and Management of Horseweed and Hairy Fleabane in California

<http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8314.pdf>

Mexican Clover, Mexican Tea (*Richardia* spp.)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; non-native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Annual to herbaceous perennial* (*shoots often die back in winter)
<i>Height</i>	< 4 inches
<i>Flowers</i>	See below. Spring to fall, up to year-round in south Florida
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, roots
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly dry
<i>Notes</i>	Can form dense colonies. Three main species: White flowers – <i>R. scabra</i> (rough Mexican clover; annual) and <i>R. brasiliensis</i> (tropical Mexican clover; herbaceous perennial); these two species are difficult to distinguish. Pinkish purple flowers – <i>R. grandiflora</i> (largeflower Mexican clover; herbaceous perennial); only occurs in peninsular Florida.



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

Richardia brasiliensis <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=2965>

Richardia grandiflora <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=4099>

Richardia scabra <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=2966>

Florida Pusley, *Richardia scabra* L.

<http://suwannee.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/FloridaPusley.pdf>

Florida Pusley Control in Pastures

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/AG/AG32000.pdf>

There's Snow in Florida

<http://okeechobee.ifas.ufl.edu/News%20columns/Snow.weed.htm>

Nutsedges (*Cyperus* spp.)

Yellow Nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)

<i>Type</i>	Sedge; non-native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Perennial
<i>Height</i>	½ to 2 ft
<i>Flowers</i>	Yellowish. Summer, fall
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, rhizomes, tubers
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly dry

Purple Nutsedge (*Cyperus rotundus*)

<i>Type</i>	Sedge; non-native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Perennial
<i>Height</i>	½ to 1 ½ ft
<i>Flowers</i>	Purplish. Summer, fall
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, rhizomes, tubers
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly dry

Notes Also known as nutgrasses; triangular stems; can form dense colonies; difficult to eradicate; the two species are very similar in appearance until they flower; allelopathic (plants secrete chemical(s) that can inhibit growth of other plants).



Nutsedges (*Cyperus* spp.) continued

Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

Cyperus esculentus <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=5057>

Cyperus rotundus <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=677>

Cyperus esculentus (yellow nutsedge)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/17496>

Cyperus rotundus (purple nutsedge)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/17506>

Weed Profile: Yellow Nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*) and Purple Nutsedge (*C. rotundus*)

<http://articles.extension.org/pages/66868/weed-profile:-yellow-nutsedge-cyperus-esculentus-and-purple-nutsedge-c-rotundus>

Sedge Biology and Management in Turf

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EP/EP49200.pdf>

Ragweed: Common (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Annual
<i>Height</i>	5 to 7 ft
<i>Flowers</i>	Tiny, green. Very late summer, fall
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to dry
<i>Notes</i>	Flowers are highly allergenic; goldenrod often mentioned as cause for hay fever in the fall when in reality it's ragweed. Resistance to glyphosate reported. Several reports of it being allelopathic (plants secrete chemical(s) that can inhibit growth of other plants).



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=60>

Ambrosia artemisiifolia (common ragweed)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/4691>

Biology and Control of Common Ragweed along Ditch and Canal Banks

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/AG/AG35600.pdf>

Management of Roadside Populations of Invasive *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* by Mowing

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/wre.12074/full>

Ragweed: Giant (*Ambrosia trifida*)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Annual
<i>Height</i>	3 to 6 ft
<i>Flowers</i>	Tiny, green. Summer, fall
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to dry
<i>Notes</i>	3 to-5 lobed leaf (seedling leaves might not be lobed); occurs mainly from panhandle to northern peninsula (but occurs in Broward County). Pollen is allergenic.



Ragweed: Giant (*Ambrosia trifida*) continued

Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=4231>

USDA NRCS Plant Atlas

<http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=AMTR>

Ambrosia trifida (giant ragweed)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/4693>

Biology and Management of Giant Ragweed

<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/BP/GWC-12.pdf>

Herbicides Operation Manual – The Texas Department of Transportation

<https://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/mnt/herbicide-manual.pdf>

Torpedograss (*Panicum repens*)

<i>Type</i>	Grass; non-native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Perennial
<i>Height</i>	½ to 1 ft (foliage)
<i>Flowers</i>	1 to 2-ft panicles. Spring to fall
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, rhizomes
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly moist
<i>Notes</i>	Grayish green foliage; can form dense colonies; very aggressive and difficult to eradicate.



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=2795>

Panicum repens (torpedo grass)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/38670>

Torpedograss Biology and Management in Turf

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EP/EP38700.pdf>

Tropical Bushmint (*Cantinoa mutabilis*; formerly *Hyptis mutabilis*)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; non-native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Herbaceous perennial
<i>Height</i>	4 to 6 ft
<i>Flowers</i>	Tiny, purple. Spring to fall, up to year-round in south Florida
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, roots
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly dry
<i>Notes</i>	Foliage and shoots have strong aromatic odor when crushed; mint family; can spread aggressively.



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

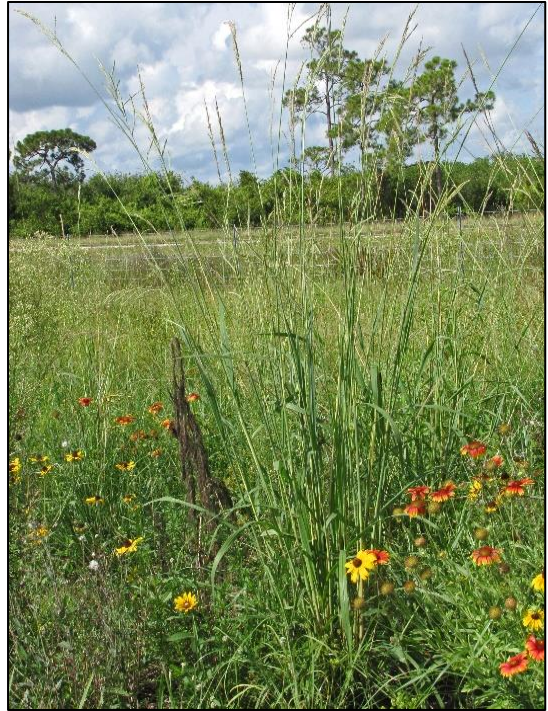
<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=5144>

Use of Milestone Herbicide to Target Invasive Skunk Vine and Restore Native Vegetation in Florida: Implications for Future Forest and Range Management

https://www.se-eppc.org/wildlandweeds/pdf/WW_Sp2014_FinalFile.pdf

Vaseygrass (*Paspalum urvillei*)

<i>Type</i>	Grass; non-native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Perennial
<i>Height</i>	1 ½ to 2 ½ ft (foliage)
<i>Flowers</i>	Tannish spikes. Spring to fall
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, rhizomes
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly dry
<i>Notes</i>	Common on roadsides, especially in moist areas; foliage often grayish green.



Vaseygrass (*Paspalum urvillei*) continued



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=1472>

Identification and Control of Johnsongrass, Vaseygrass, and Guinea Grass in Pastures

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/AG/AG37200.pdf>

Paspalum urvillei (Vasey grass)

<http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/109621>

Paspalum urvillei

http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/invweed/WeedsHI/W_Paspalum_urvillei.pdf

Vines and Vine-Like Plants

Dewberry (*Rubus* spp.)

<i>Type</i>	Broadleaf; native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Perennial
<i>Height</i>	N/A
<i>Flowers</i>	Showy, white. Late winter to spring
<i>Reproduction</i>	Seeds, rhizomes, roots
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to slightly dry, depending on species

Notes Dewberry species spread out along the ground but can creep up into and overspread taller vegetation. Northern dewberry (*R. flagellaris*) only occurs in the panhandle. Blackberry species (also *Rubus*) are more upright and can even be shrubby. For more details about the differences, see [Blackberry and Dewberry: Biology and Control](#).



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

Rubus flagellaris (Northern Dewberry) <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=6523>

Rubus trivialis (Southern Dewberry) <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=2969>

Blackberry and Dewberry: Biology and Control

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/AG/AG23800.pdf>

Green Brier (*Smilax* spp.)

<i>Type</i>	Vine; native
<i>Life cycle</i>	Most species are evergreen to semi-evergreen perennials
<i>Height</i>	N/A
<i>Flowers</i>	Greenish, yellow-greenish, or whitish, depending on species; spring in north Florida to year-round in south Florida
<i>Reproduction</i>	Rhizomes, seeds
<i>Soil moisture</i>	Moist to dry, depending on species

Notes The perennial species are very difficult to eradicate, especially those with large tuberous rhizomes. These vines easily creep up into and overspread taller vegetation. Some species may be spiny or spineless. Of the 12 species, three occur statewide – *S. auriculata*, *S. laurifolia*, and *S. tamnoides*.



Identification and Management Resources

Florida Plant Atlas

<http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Genus.aspx?id=1142>

Key to Nine Common Smilax Species of Florida

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FR/FR37500.pdf>

Controlling Greenbrier

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C867-2>