

MILKBARK

Drypetes diversifolia Krug & Urban

Synonyms: none

Family: Putranjivaceae (Guiana-plum)

FNAI Ranks: G4/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Field Description: Shrub or small tree to 35 feet tall, with rough or pebbled, often lichen-covered, white bark; often forming colonies by root suckers. **Leaves** simple, 3.2 - 5.2 inches long and 1 - 2 inches wide, evergreen, alternate, stiff, dark green, leathery, 2-ranked, oval, with entire margins, obvious veins, prominent yellow midribs, and slightly rounded or notched tips on mature leaves. On new seedlings the leaf margins are often spinose. **Male and female flowers** on separate trees; flowers small, with 5 green sepals and no petals, solitary or in clusters in the the angle between leaf and stem. **Fruit** a creamy-white, ovoid drupe averaging $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, with dry, pulpy flesh and one seed.

Similar Species: Many shrubs in tropical hammocks have oval, evergreen, alternate leaves; milkbark is distinguished by its white bark, 2-ranked leaves, and spiny juvenile leaves.

Related Rare Species: Other related rare woody species: Blodgett's wild mercury (*Argythamnia blodgettii*), maiden bush (*Savia bahamensis*), and manchineel (*Hippomane mancinella*).

Habitat: Tropical hammocks in the Keys; not known from the mainland.

Best Survey Season: Flowers May - June, fruits in the fall; bark and leaves are diagnostic all year.

Range-wide Distribution: South Florida Keys and the Bahamas.

Conservation Status: Approximately 25 populations are known, about half of these on 13 managed areas.

Protection and Management: Eradicate exotic species from hammocks. Purchase and protect remaining tracts of tropical hammock in the Keys.

References: Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, IRC 1999, Nelson 1996, Tomlinson 1980, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.