

MANCHINEEL

Hippomane mancinella L.

Synonyms: none

Family: Euphorbiaceae (spurge)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FACW+ FL-UPL



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Small **tree or shrub** with rough, fissured, dark brown or gray **bark** and toxic milky sap. **Leaves** 1 - 4.5 inches long, alternate, oval to lance-shaped, slightly toothed, soft, shiny, with conspicuous bright midvein; semi-deciduous; long leaf stalks with large, round gland at point of attachment to leaf. Leaves are held out toward the ends of short, stout, light gray twigs. **Male and female flowers** on short, fleshy stalks at the ends of branches; **flowers** yellowish-green, inconspicuous, surrounded by yellow glands. **Fruits** round, yellow-green with pink blush, sweet smelling and apple-like but **highly toxic. All parts of the plant are poisonous if handled or eaten.**

Similar Species: Wild banyan tree or shortleaf fig (*Ficus citrifolia*) leaves are similarly shaped and have a bright midvein but leaf margins are entire.

Related Rare Species: Blodgett's wild mercury (*Argythamnia blodgettii*), Bahama

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maidenbush (*Savia bahamensis*), and milkbark (*Drypetes diversifolia*).

Habitat: Found in rock barrens, hammocks, and on higher coastal berms of the Keys, always close to mangrove areas.

Best Survey Season: Flowers in April; fruits and leaves are present almost all year except for a brief time in mid-winter.

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

Conservation Status: About 20 populations are known in FL, most in parks and preserves.

Protection and Management: Avoid impacts to coastal berms, mangroves, and adjacent thickets.

References: Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Nelson 1996, Tomlinson 1980, Ward 1979, Webster 1967, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.