

## FLORIDA ZIZIPHUS

*Ziziphus celata* Judd and D. Hall

**Synonyms:** none

**Family:** Rhamnaceae (buckthorn)

**FNAI Ranks:** G1/S1

**Legal Status:** US–Endangered FL–Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US–UPL FL–UPL



Gary Knight

**Field Description:** **Shrub** with zigzag branches and short, straight, thorn-tipped twigs. **Leaves** less than 1 inch long, deciduous, alternate, leathery, hairless, often clustered on short shoots; usually wider above the middle, with rounded or notched tips and entire margins. **Flowers** tiny, with 5 white, narrow petals, and 5 showy, yellow-green sepals (occasionally 3 or 4 petals and sepals), clustered on short shoots. **Fruits** yellow, 0.5 - 0.8 inch long.

**Similar Species:** Scrub plum (*Prunus geniculata*) has thorns and zigzag stems but finely toothed leaf margins (see detailed description in this guide). Hog plum (*Ximenia americana*) has clustered leaves and yellow fruits, but thorns are in leaf axils and branches are straight. Several species of buckthorn (*Sideroxylon* or *Bumelia* spp.) are found in Lake Wales Ridge habitats; these shrubs have thorns but densely hairy leaves or twigs.

**Related Rare Species:** See Cuban snake-bark (*Colubrina cubensis* var. *floridana*) in this guide.

# Florida ziziphus

# *Ziziphus celata*

**Habitat:** Oak-hickory scrub, scrubby flatwoods, or sandhills on yellow sand.

**Best Survey Season:** Flowers late December–February, fruits May–June; leaves and stems are distinctive spring–fall.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Endemic to the Lake Wales Ridge in Polk and Highlands counties, FL.

**Conservation Status:** Five populations are known, one protected on public lands, another by conservation agreement.

**Protection & Management:** Fence populations to prevent grazing and trampling; burn every few years to stimulate reproduction and new growth; avoid chopping or disking and frequent mowing; eradicate exotic species. Continue to propagate new plants.

**References:** Coile 2000, DeLaney et al. 1989, Godt et al. 1996, Judd and Hall 1984, Nelson 1996, Race 1998, USFWS 1998, Weekley et al. 1999, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

