

Dioscorea alata

WINGED YAM

Dioscoreaceae

Common Synonyms: *Dioscorea atropurpurea*, *D. purpurea*, *D. sativa*

FLEPPC Category: 1

FDACS Listed Noxious Weed: Yes

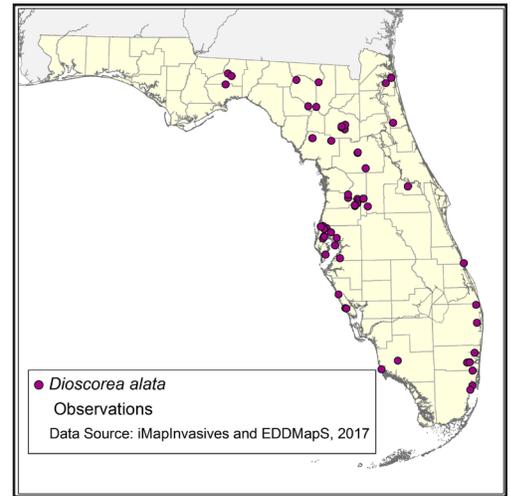
IFAS Assessment

North	PROHIBITED
Central	PROHIBITED
South	PROHIBITED

USDA Hardiness Zone: 8a-10b

Growth Habit: Forb/Herb, Vine

Origin: Southeast Asia



Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org

Description: Aggressive twining vine from a large underground tuber. Stems can be greater than 10 m in length. Internodes along the stem are square shaped with red-purple wings. Leaves have long petioles and are opposite, although often leaves fall off leaving single leaves visible. Leaves are 20 cm or longer, heart shaped, narrow, with angular basal lobes. Dioecious species with male and female flowers on separate plants. The flowers are inconspicuous. Male flowers in panicles up to 30 cm long, while female flowers grow in smaller spikes. Fruit is a 3 parted capsule with winged seeds. Bulbils (aerial tubers) form in leaf axils and are elongate, to 10 cm long and 3 cm wide. They are rough and bumpy in texture.

The air-potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) is similar, but has small or no underground tubers and alternate leaves. Native yam species such as Florida yam (*Dioscorea floridana*) is found infrequently in hammocks and floodplains of north and west Florida but does not form aerial tubers.

Habitat: Disturbed sites

Florida Introduction Date: Introduced to the Americas in the 1500s but is a recent introduction to Florida (1900s)

Control Methods: Mechanical: Cut vines that are high in trees; cut bulbils and remove from site. Dig up underground tubers if possible..

Chemical: Foliar (1-2% glyphosate [IFAS]), cut stems (10% triclopyr ester [IFAS] or undiluted triclopyr amine [UGA])..

Useful Resources:

Langeland, K.A., J.A. Ferrell, B. Sellers, G.E. MacDonald, and R.K. Stocker. 2011. Integrated management of non-native plants in natural areas of Florida. EDIS publication SP 242. University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

IFAS, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. 2018. *Dioscorea alata*. <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/dioscorea-alata/>. Accessed on June 11, 2018.

IFAS, UF. 2015. Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. *Dioscorea alata*. <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/assessments/Dioscorea-alata/> Accessed June 11, 2018.

Comments: Particularly devastating to coastal hammocks in south Florida. Has an 8-10 month growing season and experiences dormancy for 3-4 months.