

SPINY HACKBERRY

Celtis pallida Torr.

Synonyms: *Momisia pallida* (Torr.) Planch. ex Small

Celtis spinosa Spreng. var. *pallida* (Torr.) M. C. Johnston.

Family: Ulmaceae (elm)

FNAI Ranks: G4/S1

Legal Status: US—none FL—Endangered

Wetland Status: US—UPL FL—UPL



Dick Workman

Field Description: Shrub to 9 feet tall with pale, spreading branches. **Leaves** usually less than 1 inch long, alternate, simple, oval, somewhat fleshy, upper surfaces rough, leaf tips rounded, leaf margins entire to shallowly toothed; leaf nodes armed with straight, stout **spines** up to 1 inch long. **Flowers** white, inconspicuous, in small clusters in the angle of leaf and stems. **Fruit** small, round, yellow or orange.

Similar and Related Rare Species (drawing, bottom): Iguana hackberry (*Celtis iguanaea*), state-endangered, is a low, spreading shrub with stout, curved spines on branches and at leaf nodes. Leaves alternate, 1.5 - 3 inches long, rounded at the base, toothed along upper margins, with 3 prominent veins; upper surface smooth. Fruit is oval, orange or red.

Spiny hackberry

Celtis pallida

Habitat: Both species grow on shell mounds and middens in tropical coastal hammocks.

Best Survey Season: Both species flower in summer and fruit in fall; leaves and spines are distinctive all year.

Range-wide Distribution: Spiny hackberry: FL, TX, NM, AZ, northern Mexico. Iguana hackberry: Collier and Lee counties, FL; West Indies, Central and South America.

Conservation Status: Development and shell mining for fill have destroyed most of these species' habitat. Both species are known from only 3 preserves in SW FL.

Protection & Management: Monitor known populations. Protect shell mounds from mining and development.

References: Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, D'arcy 1987, IRC 1999, Nelson 1996, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1982, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

