SP 37

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Florida Pusley, *Richardia scabra* L.[1]

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Classification

Common Name: Florida Pusley

Scientific Name: *Richardia scabra* L.

Family: Rubiaceae, Madder Family

Seedling

The cotyledons are oval and smooth with a blunt, rounded tip and a distinct maroon area near the base (Figure 1). The first leaves are creased in the center, covered with stiff hairs and at right angles to the cotyledons.

Figure 1. Seedling, Florida Pusley (*Richardia scabra* L.).

Mature Plant

Richardia scabra is an erect to prostrate, loosely branched annual (Figure 2). The stems are hairy, up to 0.8 m long and do not usually root at the nodes. The leaves are oppositely arranged, ovate to elliptic-lanceolate shaped, up to 6.5 cm long and 2.5 cm wide. The leaves may be almost smooth, except for the margins, to rough on both leaf surfaces, and predominantly rough on principal veins. The leaf apex may be rounded to pointed. The leaf base is tapered with petioles ranging from very short to about 5 mm long. The opposite leaves are connected by a sheath with several ascending, hair-like appendages from 2-5 mm in length. The flowers are in a terminal head-like cluster composed of 20 or more flowers. The head is usually subtended by two pairs of leaves. The second or upper pair is usually much smaller than, and at right angles to, the lower pair of leaves. The outer part of the flower consists of 6 narrow lobes. These lobes are joined at the base forming a tube. The petals are also united and are usually white to occasionally pink or lavender and funnelform in

1. This document is an excerpt from Weeds in Florida, SP 37, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: May 1991. Revised: December 2004. Reviewed: November 2006. Please visit the EDIS Website at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

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shape. The tube ranges in length from 2-8 mm and the lobes of the petals are from 0.5-2.5 mm long. Each flower typically produces 3 nutlets from 2-3.5 mm in length and about 1.5-2 mm in width. The nutlets are more or less oblong to obovate shaped. The outer surface of the nutlet is covered with wart-like protuberances.

Figure 2. Mature plant, Florida Pusley (*Richardia scabra* L.)

History

Richardia was named for an English physician, Richard Richardson. The Latin word *scabra* means rough and refers to the texture of the plant.

Habitat

Richardia scabra is commonly found in sandy savannas and grasslands, on roadsides, turf and in cultivated fields and waste areas from central Florida northward to southern Virginia, and westward to Texas. Its range is continuous from this area southward through Mexico and Central America to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia in South America, and Cuba and Jamaica in the West Indies. Specimens collected in other areas (Indiana in the United States, and Rhodesia, Tanzania and Transvaal in Africa) are presumed to be adventive.

Biology

This weed will bloom in almost any month that lacks frost. It is frequently mixed with Brazil Pusley, *Richardia brasiliensis*.

Control

Peanuts

Florida Pusley is not susceptible to any postemergence herbicide that is currently labeled for use in peanuts. Conversely, Prowl, Sonalan, Dual, Pursuit, Strongarm, Zorial, and Valor all provide good to excellent control when applied preemergence. The most common, and consistent, herbicides used to control Florida pulsey are Prowl or Sonalan. It is essential to apply preemergence herbicides if the production area contains Florida pusley.

Cotton

Prowl and Treflan are the most effective herbicides to control Florida pusley in cotton. Cotoran, Karmex, and Staple are not highly effective when applied preemergence. Postemergence applications of glyphosate or Staple may provide as much as 70% control if weeds are extremely small at time of application. However, glyphosate and Staple often give little or no control of Florida pusley. The most effective strategy is to apply Prowl or Treflan in production areas that contain Florida pusley.