



Common Name: CLIMBING BUCKTHORN

Scientific Name: *Sageretia minutiflora* (Michaux) Charles Mohr

Other Commonly Used Names: small-flowered buckthorn, shell mound buckthorn, small-flowered mock buckthorn

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Rhamnus minutiflora* Michaux, *Sageretia michauxii* Brongniart

Family: Rhamnaceae (buckthorn)

Rarity Ranks: G4/S1?

State Legal Status: Threatened

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: FAC

Description: Deciduous **shrub** up to 9 feet (3 meters) tall, with sprawling and climbing stems up to 1 inch (3 cm) in diameter, bearing short, thorn-tipped branchlets. **Leaves** up to $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches (6 cm) long and up to $\frac{7}{8}$ inch (2 cm) wide, oval, opposite, somewhat leathery, with conspicuously netted veins; margins with small teeth; deciduous in late winter. **Flowers** with 5 tiny, white petals; sweetly fragrant, in leafy spikes up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (4 cm) long near the ends of branches.

Fruit a rounded, purplish berry up to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (5 - 8 mm) long, splitting into 3 leathery nutlets by the end of winter.

Similar Species: Climbing buckthorn is distinguished from similar shrubs by its climbing habit, opposite leaves, and thorn-tipped branches. Yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*) is an evergreen shrub that often occurs with climbing buckthorn; it lacks thorns and its leaves are smaller and alternate. Also compare with Florida-privet (*Forestiera segregata*) on this website.

Related Rare Species: None in Georgia.

Habitat: Limestone bluffs, forested shell mounds on barrier islands, and evergreen hammocks along stream banks and coastal marshes.

Life History: There is little information reported about the life history of climbing buckthorn. Its fragrant, white flowers are pollinated by insects; its fruits are likely dispersed by small mammals.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys are best conducted during flowering (August) and fruiting (September–November). Plants may be identified throughout growing season by leaves and thorny branches.

Range: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and North Carolina

Threats: Clearing and conversion of habitat to developments.

Georgia Conservation Status: About 12 populations are known, 6 on public lands (including one military base).

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect maritime hammocks, shell mounds, and other coastal habitats from development and clearcutting.

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Date Compiled or Updated:

L.Chafin, Aug. 2008: original account

D.Weiler, Jan. 2010: added pictures



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