

JASMINUM DICHOTOMUM VAHL

Oleaceae/Olive Family

Common Name: Gold Coast jasmine
Synonymy: None
Origin: Tropical west Africa

Botanical Description: Scrambling shrub or woody climber, evergreen, to 8 m (26 ft) tall, with climbing stems longer; stems glabrous. Leaves opposite, appearing simple (unifoliolate), oval to roundish oblong, glossy, leathery, 5-7 cm (2-4 in) long, with short-pointed tips. Flowers white (pink in bud), quite fragrant, opening at night, in clusters at leaf axils; petals fused into a narrow tube to 2.5 cm (1 in) long, with 5-9 terminal lobes about 1.3 cm (0.5 in) long, spreading in star-shaped fashion. Fruit a small, fleshy, roundish, black, 2-lobed berry.

NOTE: Without flowers or fruits present, may be confused with the native snowberry, *Chiococca alba* (L.) A. Hitchc., but its opposite leaves joined at the nodes by a stipular line scar.

Ecological Significance: Introduced into Florida for ornament in the late 1920s (Hammer 1996). As an ornamental, considered “promising in South Florida” in 1947 (Bailey and Bailey 1947). More recently considered weedy in cultivated landscapes (Broschat and Meerow 1991) and not recommended (Nelson 1996). Recognized as spreading from cultivation not only in disturbed areas but in hammocks by 1970s (Long and Lakela 1971, Morton 1976, Austin 1978). Vigorously invades intact, undisturbed hardwood forests; can climb high into the tree canopy of mature forests, completely enshrouding native vegetation and reducing native plant diversity (Hammer 1996). Reported from 7 natural areas in Dade County (EPPC 1996). Difficult to control (Nelson 1996).

Distribution: One of 7 species of non-native jasmines naturalized in Florida. Naturalized populations of *J. dichotomum* documented by herbarium specimens from Dade, Monroe, Collier, and Highlands counties (Wunderlin *et al.* 1996).



Opposite leaves

GOLD COAST JASMINE

Life History: Restricted to areas with average minimum temperatures above 1.7°C (35°F) (Broschat and Meerow 1991). Easy to grow; propagated in cultivation from cuttings; may not tolerate soggy root zones (Chabot 1952). Will grow near coasts where protected from salt spray (Menninger 1964). Flowers all year, most abundantly in spring; ripe fruit found from early summer into early winter (Hammer 1996). Seeds dispersed by birds and raccoons, with dense plots of seedlings often seen arising from raccoon droppings (Hammer 1996).

RH



Habit

KAL



**Climbing in Greynolds Park,
Miami-Dade County**