

# White flowered wandering Jew

## *Tradescantia fluminensis* (Vell.) Commelinaceae

### INTRODUCTION

There are many people who are fond of *Tradescantia* for its multitude of foliage variations and ease of propagation. However in some countries, *Tradescantia* is considered an agricultural pest. Naturalization of wandering Jew in floodplain forests and bottomlands has occurred from central Florida to the Pan Handle, in counties including Alachua, Orange, Leon, and Flagler. *Tradescantia* is considered a Category I exotic invasive by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council.

### DESCRIPTION

*Tradescantia* is a creeping, succulent, multi-branching perennial herb that can form a dense ground cover and root freely at nodes. Alternate, lanceolate shaped leaves have parallel veins that are either green or tinged with purple. Leaves are also somewhat pubescent. Leaf blades arise from short, closed sheaths and are 2 inches long and 0.75 inches wide. Some are glabrous or have ciliate margins. Flowers are white, in small clusters at stem tips. Fruits are small, 3-parted capsules containing black, pitted seeds.

Reproduction occurs vegetatively from stems that root at the soil surface, or by fragmentation. Fragments may also be dispersed by water. Humans, animals, and machinery facilitate the spread of this invasive species.

### IMPACTS

*Tradescantia* will invade disturbed areas, natural forests, riparian zones, urban areas, hammocks, and wetlands. The growth habit of wandering Jew is such that it will form a dense groundcover and smother the native groundcover and seedlings. Once established, *Tradescantia* is difficult to control.

## MANAGEMENT

Preventative: The first step in preventative control of *Tradescantia* is to limit planting and removal of existing plants within the landscape. Any fragments should be disposed of properly as to prevent reinfestation.

Cultural: Cattle and chickens eat *T. fluminensis*. The planting of trees and other native species will help to out-compete this species.

Mechanical: Hand weeding is suitable for removal of small infestations. Be certain to remove all fragments, as these will reroot and reinfest an area.

Biological: There are no known biological agents for *Tradescantia* control. However in New Zealand and areas where this weed is a problem, investigations are being conducted.

Chemical: Chemical control by herbicides is considered a practical means of controlling large infestations. Repeat applications may be necessary. Limited research has been conducted but glyphosate or triclopyr at 1-2% are considered the best approach thus far.

## REFERENCES AND USEFUL LINKS:

Floridata Homepage: <http://www.floridata.com>

University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants:  
<http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/welcome.html>

University of Florida's Cooperative Extension Electronic Data Information Source:  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/index.html>

Langeland, K.A. and K. Craddock Burks. 1998. Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. IFAS Publication SP 257. University of Florida, Gainesville. 165 pp.

The Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group. Weeds Gone Wild: Alien Plant Invaders of Natural Areas: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/index.htm>

Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER). Plant Threats to Pacific Ecosystems:  
<http://www.hear.org/pier/threats.htm>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Plants Database: <http://plants.usda.gov>

Global Invasive Species Database: <http://www.issg.org>

## Mature Plant

- Creeping, multi-branching, succulent plant
- Perennial, vegetative reproduction from creeping stolons
- Grows 1 to 2 feet in height



## Leaves

- Alternate arrangement
- Lanceolate shaped, 2 inches long
- Slight pubescence
- Parallel veination with prominent recessed midvein
- Maybe tinged with purple



## Flowers

- Flowers occur in small clusters at the tip of the stem
- 3 petals
- Fruit are small, 3 parted capsules
- Seeds are black and pitted

