

# Paederia cruddasiana Prain



**Common Name:** Sewervine

**Synonymy:** None

**Origin:** India to China and Southeast Asia

**Botanical Description:** Deciduous, perennial, twining vine from woody rootstock; stems to 10 m (33 ft) or more, glabrous or with a few hairs, climbing or trailing along the ground and rooting at the nodes; foliage with disagreeable odor when crushed. Leaves opposite, with conspicuous triangular stipules to 0.6 cm (0.2 in) long; ovate to elliptic, glabrous, lower surface sometimes with tufts of hair near midrib or with hairs along upper and lower veins, to 16 cm (6.3 in) long and 10 cm (4 in) wide; margins entire, bases rounded to heart shaped, tips acute to very long-pointed; petioles to 10 cm (4 in) long. Flowers small, grayish pink or whitish pink with a dark purple throat, in showy, elongate, many-branched, leafy clusters to 50 cm (20 in) long; corolla densely hairy, tubular, with 5 spreading lobes. Fruit shiny, brown or yellowish brown, flattened, an elliptic to broadly ovate capsule to 1.1 cm (0.5 in) long, with 2 black, winged, elliptic- to broadly-ovate seeds.

**NOTE:** Differs from the nonnative, invasive *P. foetida*, skunk vine, which has round fruits and round seeds that lack wings, however is very similar in smell, appearance, and habit.

**Ecological Significance:** Possibly introduced as a fiber source along with *P. foetida* in the early 1900s, or perhaps a more recent introduction, but not correctly identified until 1995 (Hammer 1995, Morton 1976). Naturalized in at least 6 conservation areas in

south Florida in mesic hammocks, pine rocklands, and rockland hammocks (Gann et al. 2001). Rapidly invaded tropical hardwood hammocks in Miami-Dade County after Hurricane Andrew, forming a thick vine blanket that threatens to alter hardwood regeneration and hammock ecology (Schmitz et al. 1997). Woody tropical vines such as *P. cruddasiana* may “present a greater potential for strong negative interactions with subtropical hardwood forest regeneration than herbaceous vines or woody hemiphytes” (Horvitz et al. 1998), and were thought to be the greatest threat to hammock recovery after Hurricane Andrew (Randall et al. 1997). Large, dense, difficult-to-control monocultures occur in Matheson Hammock and Snapper Creek Preserve in Miami-Dade County (Hammer 1995, FLEPPC 2002).

**Distribution:** Herbarium specimens documented from Miami-Dade County (Wunderlin and Hansen 2002). *P. cruddasiana* and *P. foetida* are prohibited noxious weeds in Florida.

**Life History:** Fast growing and tolerant of a variety of soil and light conditions (Puff 1991). Occurs along river edges, in scrub forests, along roadsides, and on forest edges in its home range (Puff 1991). Vines flower profusely and produce large quantities of viable seed (Langeland and Stocker 1997). The small fruits are reportedly bird dispersed (Hammer 1995). Vines root readily when stems come into contact with the ground (Hammer 1995), and may spread from rooted fragments. Sulfur compounds in the foliage give the vine a foul odor, hence the common name (Mabberley 1997).