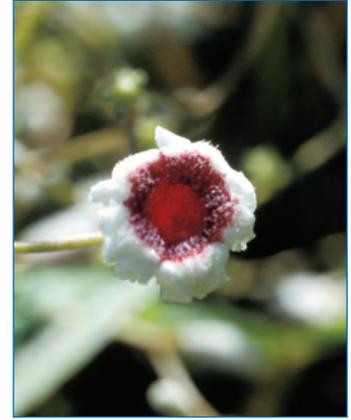


Paederia foetida L.



Common Name: Skunk vine, Chinese fever vine

Synonymy: *P. scandens* Lour., *P. chinensis* Hance, *P. tomentosa* Blume

Origin: Eastern and southern Asia

Botanical Description: Perennial twining vine from woody rootstock; stems to 7 m (23 ft) or more, climbing, or prostrate and rooting at the nodes. Leaves opposite (rarely in whorls of 3), with conspicuous stipules; petioles commonly to 6 cm (2.4 in) long; blades entire, oval to linear-lanceolate, 2-11 cm (1-4.3 in) long, hairy or glabrous, often lobed at base; leaves and stems with disagreeable odor, especially when crushed. Flowers small, grayish pink or lilac, in broad or long, “leafy”, curving clusters, terminal or at leaf axils; corolla densely hairy, tubular with 5 (usually) spreading lobes. Fruit a shiny brown, nearly globose capsule, to 0.7 cm (0.3 in) wide, with 2 black, roundish seeds, these often dotted with white raphides.

NOTE: May be confused with the closely related, also naturalized, sewer vine, *P. cruddasiana* Prain, but its fruits oval, flattened, with distinctly winged seeds.

Ecological Significance: Introduced by the United States Department of Agriculture before 1897 as a potential fiber plant; by 1916 already “a troublesome weed” around the Brooksville Field Station (Morton 1976). Noted as escaping to thickets and fence rows in peninsular Florida by Small (1933). Considered an economically important weed by 1977 (Reed 1977b). Occurs most often in tree gaps and other disturbed areas in its native range (Puff 1991). In Florida, invades various native plant communities, including sandhill, floodplain, and upland mixed forest. Can create dense canopies leading to damage or death of native vegetation (Gann and Gordon 1998). In Orange County, found in relatively wet areas,

growing on wetland natives such as dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine* L.). Has smothered out portions of one of the few remaining populations of the endemic, federally endangered Cooley’s water willow (*Justicia cooleyi* Monachino & Leonard) (S. Bowman, Native Plant Society, and D. Martin, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 1995 pers. comm.).

Distribution: In Florida, documented as invading upland hardwood/mixed forests, slope forests, hydric hammocks, wet flatwoods, bottomland forests, dome swamps, swamp strands, and ruderal communities. Documented by herbarium specimens in 16 counties, most commonly in northwest central Florida, but also documented in the Panhandle as far west as Franklin, Gadsden, and Leon counties and south in Broward County (Wunderlin and Hansen 2004). Reported in natural areas in Nassau, Lake, Seminole, Polk, Pinellas, and Monroe counties (FLEPPC 2005). Also naturalized in Louisiana and South Carolina, although perhaps not persisting there (Gann-Matzen 1994). A principal or common weed in Hawaii, present as a weed in Brazil; in its native range, a serious weed in New Guinea (Holm et al. 1979).

Life History: Fast-growing; shows wide-ranging adaptability to different light, soil, and salt conditions (Puff 1991). Able to establish and grow above the frost line, though some leaves may turn yellow red or drop following a freeze (G. Greger, City of Winter Park, and K. C. Burks, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, personal observations). Sensitive to fire (Gann and Gordon 1998). Flowers and fruits mostly in summer and fall; seeds may be dispersed by birds (Gann-Matzen 1994). May also be spread by accidental transport of rooted fragments.