

## PLANTING GUIDE

### *Aeschynomene americana*

#### Jointvetch

**Description:** *Aeschynomene* is an upright summer annual legume 3 to 6-feet tall. Stems are well branched and moderately leafy. Leaves are compound, have 25 to 60 leaflets measuring three inches long, and are sensitive to light and touch. Flowers are yellow with dark lines and appear as loose clusters.

**Conservation Use:** Jointvetch is primarily an annual grazing crop that can be cut for hay before maturity. Deer graze it and quail, dove, and turkey eat the seed. It can also be used as components of fresh water wetland reclamation seedings.

**Cultivars:** A selection 'F-149' was distributed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) since the 1950's although never formally released. Little variation occurs in native stands throughout the state. Researchers at the University of Florida have done extensive work with this species. *Aeschynomene* is commercially available.



**Site:** The site should be moderately drained to poorly drained. If the site is one which floods in rainy season, the stand should be well established before it does. During hot weather seedlings can be damaged within a few days. Taller plants have a moderate tolerance to temporary flooding.

**Soil Preparation:** The soil should be well prepared by plowing, disking and packing. Excellent volunteer stands may be obtained by disking areas that had successful stands and matured seed the previous year. Apply lime if necessary to bring the soil pH into the 5.5 to 6.5 range.

**Seeding:** Seed between March 1 and June 30, if irrigated, or after June 1st when there is a greater chance of adequate rainfall to allow germination of the seed and sustain the seedlings. In a prepared seed bed broadcast 5 lbs/A dehulled seed, or 10lbs/A in the hull. All seed should be inoculated with either "cowpea" or special *aeschynomene* culture. If seeding into existing pastures, seeding rate should be doubled. Cultipack after seeding.

**Seeding Depth:** Place seed at 1/2 to 1 inch.

**Fertilization:** Maintain pH of 5.5 to 6.0. Apply fertilizer according to soil test recommendations.

**Management:** Initiate grazing when plants are 18-24 inches high and remove cattle when grazed to **2-3** inches. To insure a volunteer crop, grazing must cease after October 1st, to allow blooming, seed set, and seed maturation. After seed maturation, graze to use forage before November 1 when forage value decreases. Volunteering following a seed crop can be encouraged and a stand secured by disking or chopping the area in early to mid-spring of succeeding years. Graze the area until volunteer seed germinates to reduce weed competition. Resume grazing when plants are 18 inches high.