

WANTED: Stop The Spread

Tropical Soda Apple

Solanum viarum Dunal



Figure 1

CONCERNS: Tropical Soda Apple (TSA) is a Federal Noxious Weed and is aptly named The Plant From Hell! This exotic weed has been in Florida for several years and has recently moved into Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina. TSA can overtake pastures, roadsides and recreational areas making them nearly impenetrable to domestic animals, large wildlife and man.



Figure 2

SPREAD: Mature fruit are eaten by livestock and wildlife. Viable seed pass through the animal and are defecated. Seed can also be spread as contaminants of hay, sod, seed, composted manure and potting media.

HABITAT: Pastureland, roadsides, cattle yards and other areas frequented by animals or that have received mulches, sod or seed from areas infested by TSA.



Figure 3

DESCRIPTION: TSA plants can reach several feet in height and width (Fig. 1). The fig-shaped leaves, stems, petioles and pedicles are armed with thorn-like, straight prickles up to 3/4 inch long (Fig. 2). Flowers have white recurved petals (Fig. 3). Immature fruit are green with a "watermelon-like" mottled appearance (Fig. 4); mature fruit are yellow and are 1-to-1 1/2 inches in diameter.



Figure 4

CONTROL: Control programs are available. If you find a suspected infestation, contact your local County Extension Office to confirm identification and to obtain current control recommendations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICE

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Dr. G. Keith Douce, Dr. Tim R. Murphy, and Brian Watson - Georgia CAPS Program