

Brazil Pusley, *Richardia brasiliensis* (Moq.)¹

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Classification

Common Name: Brazil Pusley

Scientific Name: *Richardia brasiliensis* (Moq.)

Family: Gomez Rubiaceae, Madder Family

Seedling

The cotyledons are oblong and smooth, with a distinct maroon area near the base (Figure 1). The first leaves are creased in the center, covered with stiff hairs and at right angles to the cotyledons.



Figure 1. Seedling, Brazil Pusley, *Richardia brasiliensis* (Moq.)

Mature Plant

Brazil Pusley is an annual or perennial from a thickened rootstock that may be deep (Figure 2). Its stems are up to 0.4 m long and may be found growing prostrate or ascending. The stems are freely branched, covered with somewhat stiff hairs and rarely root from lower nodes. The leaves are opposite, elliptic to ovate in shape and have a pointed to rounded tip. The leaf base is elongated and the petiole may be almost absent to 1 cm long. The leaves may be up to 6.5 cm long and 2.4 cm wide and are rough textured on both sides. The petioles of opposite leaves are connected by stipules which have become sheath-like. These sheaths have ascending hairs or bristles to about 5 mm long. The flowers are in a terminal head-like cluster, up to 15 mm in diameter, of 20 or more flowers. The flowers typically have 2 pairs of short, broad leaves underneath. The upper-most pair is usually much smaller and at right angles to the lower pair. The outer part of the flower consists typically of 6 narrow lobes, up to 3.5 mm long, which have hairy margins. The lobes are joined at the base, forming a tube up to 1.5 mm long. The petals are also united and are white in coloration. The tube is funnellform in shape and from 3-8 mm long. Each flower usually produces 3 nutlets up to 3 mm long and 2 mm wide. The outside of the nutlet has short thick hairs.

History

Richardia was named for an English physician, Richard Richardson. *Brasiliensis* refers to the country of origin, Brazil.

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Figure 2. Mature plant, Brazil Pusley, *Richardia brasiliensis* (Moq.)

Habitat

In Florida this plant occurs throughout the state on disturbed sites and roadsides, and in pastures and lawns. It is distributed in the southeastern United States, from southern Texas along the coastal plain to southeastern Virginia.

Biology

This weed will bloom in almost any month that lacks frost. The thick fleshy root is considered a reservoir for nematodes. This species is frequently mixed with Florida Pusley, *Richardia scabra*, which does not contain short, stiff hairs on the fruit or a thickened, woody rootstock.