

Heartwing Sorrel, *Rumex hastatulus* Baldwin ex Ell.¹

David W. Hall, Vernon V. Vandiver and Brent A. Sellers²

Classification

Common Name: Heartwing Sorrel

Scientific Name: *Rumex hastatulus* Baldwin ex Ell.

Family: Polygonaceae, Buckwheat Family

Seedling

The cotyledon blades are thickened and about 0.5 cm long (Figure 1). The veins are not apparent. The petioles are flat on the upper surface. The first true leaves are alternate.



Figure 1. Seedling, Heartwing Sorrel, *Rumex hastatulus* Baldwin ex Ell.

Mature Plant

Heartwing Sorrel is a winter annual or rarely a short-lived perennial (Figure 2). The leaves have the shape of an arrowhead. The male and female flowers are on separate plants and are pink to purple-red. The female flowers have outer sepals 0.5-1.0 mm long. The fruit (achene) is 3-4 mm long and has smooth papery wings.

History

The genus name *Rumex* is the Latin name which was used for this plant. The Latin species name *hastatulus* means spear-shaped and refers to the shape of the leaves.

Habitat

This weed is common on sandy soil throughout the coastal plain of the southeastern United States. It occurs in Florida from the central part of the state northward into the southeastern United States to Texas, and northward through the Midwest to Montana and Illinois and through the Northeast to Massachusetts.

Biology

The seeds are a common wild bird food. Oxalates in this plant can be poisonous by binding calcium in the blood. The sap can cause dermatitis in sensitive individuals.

1. This document is SP 37, one of a series of the Agronomy Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date May 1991. Revised February 2006. Reviewed January 2012. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. David W. Hall, former extension botanist, Herbarium, Florida Museum of Natural History; Vernon V. Vandiver, associate professor emeritus, Agronomy Department; Brent A. Sellers, assistant professor, Agronomy Department, Range Cattle Research and Education Center--Ona, FL; Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.