

# Florida Betony, *Stachys floridana* Shuttlew.<sup>1</sup>

D. W. Hall, V. V. Vandiver, and J. A. Ferrell<sup>2</sup>

## Classification

Common Name: Florida Betony

Scientific Name: *Stachys floridana* Shuttlew.

Family: Labiatae (Lamiaceae), Mint Family

## Seedling

The seedlings are rarely encountered (Figure 1). Virtually all the spread is by tubers. The young sprouts from the tubers have leaves on opposite sides at the stem. The stem is usually square and quite hairy.

## Mature Plant

Florida Betony is a square-stemmed, erect, hairy perennial which spreads by seeds, rhizomes and tubers (Figure 2). The tubers are segmented and resemble a rattlesnake's white rattle, usually up to 4 cm long and about 1 cm wide, although they may be up to 8 cm long. The individual segments are usually shorter than broad. The stems may grow to about 0.5 m tall. The simple leaves are opposite on the stem and have petioles up to 3.5 cm long. The leaf blades may be up to 5.5 cm long and 2.7 cm wide. The leaf base ranges from heart shaped to blunt. The flowers occur in clusters of 3-6 in the upper leaf axils. The sepals are fused, forming a tube which is hairy, up to 7 mm long, and with



Figure 1. Seedling, Florida Betony, *Stachys floridana* Shuttlew.

5 lanceolate lobes. The petals are fused, 2-lipped, and up to 1.3 cm long. The upper lip is somewhat erect. The lower lip is 3-lobed. The 4 stamens and the 2-cleft stigma extend outside the tube. The fruit is a schizocarp (a dry fruit that splits into 2 halves, each half up to 1.7 mm long). The seeds are about 1 mm long.

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; Jason A. Ferrell, assistant professor, Agronomy Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Mature plant, Florida Betony, *Stachys floridana* Shuttlew.

## History

The name for the genus, *Stachys*, is derived from the Greek word *stachys* which means an ear of wheat or spike, as the flowers appear to be arranged in such a manner. The Latinized English species name *floridana* refers to the fact that it was first named from a Florida collection. This species was thought to be restricted (endemic) to Florida until the 1940s or 1950s.

## Habitat

This weed occurs on wet sandy soils, lawns, roadsides and thickets throughout Florida westward to Texas and northward to Virginia.

## Biology

The most important means of spread is by tubers in soil moved with ornamentals or turf.