



# Brazilian Jasmine

## Taxonomy

Order: Oleales

Family: Oleaceae

Species: *Jasminum fluminense* Vell

Synonym: *Jasminum bahiense*

## Summary

A woody evergreen vine native to sub-Saharan Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, it is cultivated as an ornamental plant but can act as a highly invasive weed that is aggressive and difficult to control. It has become established in areas of the subtropics and subtropics, including much of Caribbean, Central America, and Florida. It was first described from Brazil, where it was introduced by early Portuguese explorers.



*Jasminum fluminense* © John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org

## Biology

Commonly found growing along roads, riverbanks, agricultural fields, forest openings, and disturbed areas moist undisturbed forests in tropical and subtropical regions. It is also commonly planted as an ornamental in gardens, particularly on hedges and fences. Brazilian Jasmine has a high germination rate, produces numerous seeds and dense plots of seedlings can be found in the wild. It roots whenever stems meet the ground. The stems of established plants may extend as much as 2 or 3 m in a year, however seedlings grow much more slowly.

## Distribution in Caribbean

Common throughout the Caribbean region where it was introduced in the early 1900s, in disturbed and natural habitats.

## Pathway of Entry

Natural dispersal: seeds are easily dispersed by birds and mammals; vegetatively by secondary stems  
Intentional dispersal: planted as an ornamental and hedge plant; propagated by cuttings or sold as seeds

## Impact

Brazilian Jasmine is a vigorous vine that climbs high into the canopy of mature forests, completely smothering native trees, out-competing understory plants. It has the potential to invade natural undisturbed forests and modify plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structures and altering ecological functions. It has the potential to be a serious environmental weed and a threat to native biodiversity in suitable habitats.



## Further Information:

<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/115014>

Identification and Biology of Nonnative Plants in Florida's Natural Areas – Second Edition, by K.A. Langeland, H.M. Cherry, et al. University of Florida-IFAS Publication # SP 257. 2008



*Jasminum fluminense* foliage © Toptropicals.com



*Jasminum fluminense* flowers © Toptropicals.com



*Jasminum fluminense* invading forest © Forest and Kim Starr, CC BY 4.0



*Jasminum dichotomum* © Toptropicals.com

### Field Description

A woody evergreen twining vine reaching 4-6 metres in length and with numerous lateral branches. Stems reach 1cm in diameter, are densely hairy when young and lack hairs when mature. Leaves are opposite and trifoliate, both the leaf and leaflets are stalked. The terminal leaflet is larger (up to 7cm long with a stalk up to 2cm). Leaflets broadly ovate, pubescent above and below with pointed tips.

Flowers are white, quite fragrant, opening at night, in broad, branched clusters at leaf axils; petals fused into a narrow, slightly curved tube to 2.5 cm long, with 5-7 terminal lobes shorter than the tube, spreading in star-shaped fashion. The fruit are small (5-8 mm in diameter), fleshy, roundish, black, shiny 2-lobed berries.

### Similar Species

There are 450+ species of *Jasminum* and several are invasive and could easily be confused with *J. fluminense*. Gold Coast Jasmine, *J. dichotomum*, is another tropical African species that has become invasive in the Americas. It can be distinguished from *J. fluminense* by the leaf arrangement, *J. fluminense* leaves are trifoliate whereas *J. dichotomum* leaves are unifoliate.

The native vine most likely to be confused with Jasmine is West Indian milkberry, *Chiococca alba*, an evergreen woody vine or scrambling shrub that often grows on other vegetation and may reach a height of 6m. The leaves are unifoliate, the bell-shaped flowers are yellow and the fruit are white.