

ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

May 2023

Cissus verticillata or princess vine was originally discovered in tropical America. Within Florida, the climbing vine can often be referred to as seasonvine or possum grape vine. From the grape family Vitaceae, this flowering plant expresses a very unique characteristic of this family; the leaves are opposite the flowering part of the plant. This makes it incredibly easy to spot when there are no flowering parts. However, controlling this weedy vine is particularly troublesome for citrus growers in SW Florida. Preventative measures such as ditch banks help to stem the tide but once the vine has infiltrated a citrus grove getting ride of the plant requires either complete removal usually by hand or the use of chemical herbicides ([Kanissery and McAvoy, 2018](#)).



THPO



Kanissery and McAvoy, 2018



Wildsouthflorida.com



Further south, in Brazil, the vine is seen as a medicinal plant and called “vegetal insulin” often used by locals for ailments such as Type II diabetes and arthritis. In 2007, a study was conducted to test the plants effectiveness within diabetic rats, finding that the plants bioactive constituent, tyramine, did help to reduce hyperglycemia and hyperlipidemia ([Pepato, et al. 2003](#)). In 2021, the scientists conducted another study on the effects of the plant and its ability to reduce inflammation in gerbils ([Kim, et al. 2021](#)). The use of plants as medicine is not a new topic but it is interesting to recognize that while *Cissus verticillata* is considered a nuisance for citrus growers in the U.S., it is recognized as a life-save outside of the U.S. ([WildSouthFlorida.com](#)).

In 2019, the Environmental Resources Management Division of H.E.R.O went out into the field to gather the plants that make up the herbarium collection housed at the THPO office. In 2022, the ERMD team went back out into the field to gather even more plants. Keep a look out for more of these specimens (both native and invasive) in future artifact of the month posts!

