UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING PLANT PHOTOS FOR IDENTIFICATION

Marc S. Frank
UF/IFAS Plant Identification and Information Service
University of Florida Herbarium
Florida Museum of Natural History

FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

DDIS is better (and more secure) than email!

- The DDIS system is designed for registered users in Florida to quickly submit digital photos and relevant sample information in a secure format that is easy to use, and allows us to respond rapidly with a plant identification and links to websites with more information about the plant
- You can access DDIS at http://ddis.ifas.ufl.edu/
  - For a tutorial on how to submit samples using DDIS, log in and click the "quick start" tab on the DDIS homepage

Submitting photos for identification

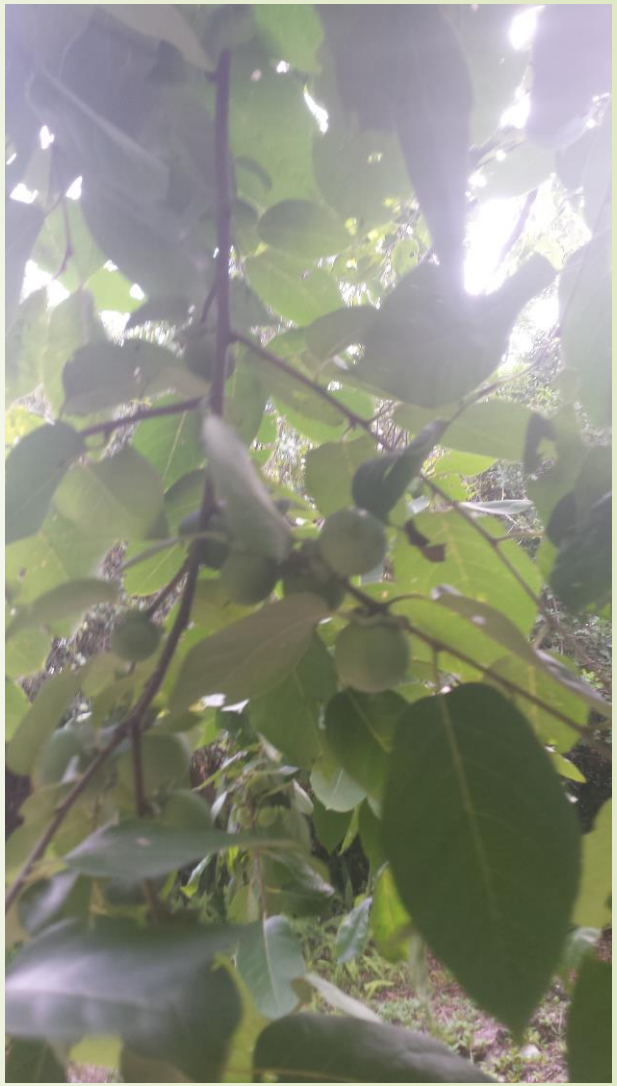
- Identifying plants from photos is challenging, so it is helpful if you include the same detailed **location**, **context**, and **plant description** information that you would provide on the form you'd send with a physical sample
- Always indicate **what Florida county** the plant is growing in. If the plant was photographed out of state or out of country, be sure to tell us where!

Submitting photos for identification

- Generally a single photo is not sufficient for confident identification. Try to take:
  - a photo of the **entire plant**
  - a close-up of the **stem with leaves** (so we can see leaf arrangement)
  - a close-up of **flowers or fruit**
- Include a ruler, coin, or person in the photo for scale if possible

Examples of photos showing diagnostic characteristics:

Examples of photos of limited diagnostic value:



Submitting photos for identification: photo quality is very important!

- Make sure your photos are in focus and the plant you want identified is clear and obvious, not obscured by glaring sunlight or shade
- Photos need to be high enough resolution that we can zoom in and see plant details without the image become pixilated

Submitting photos for identification— just doesn't work for certain types of plants

- Generally, we are not able to provide genus- or species-level IDs on grasses or sedges based on photos. For grasses and sedges, we need to examine a flowering/fruiting physical sample under a microscope
- Photos of sterile samples (those lacking flowers or fruits) are also very hard to ID to the species level, so you may want to send a physical sample instead

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about submitting a sample or have not received a diagnosis on a sample you submitted

- Marc Frank
- Extension Botanist
  (352) 273-1994
  mfrank@flmnh.ufl.edu or
  plantid@flmnh.ufl.edu