

**A CORRECTED IDENTIFICATION AND A NEW
COMBINATION FOR A RECENT FLORIDA INTRODUCTION:
AGALOMA GRAMINEA (EUPHORBIACEAE)**

Daniel B. Ward and Christine M. House
Department of Botany, University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT: *Euphorbia graminea* (Euphorbiaceae) is confirmed as a recent introduction to the Florida flora, and *E. oerstediana* is excluded as a misidentification. Both are considered best assigned to the segregate genus *Agaloma*, within which **A. graminea** is formed as a new combination.

KEY WORDS: *Agaloma*, *Euphorbia*, Euphorbiaceae, Florida flora.

In 1994 Alan Herndon (Sida 16: 208-209) identified a spurge found on greenhouse wastes in Dade County, Florida, as *Euphorbia graminea* Jacquin (Euphorbiaceae), a species common throughout Mexico and central America and the West Indies. Other Florida botanists quickly identified it as *Euphorbia oerstediana* Klotzsch & Garcke, an infrequent species of much the same range.

In the belief the Florida plant was *Euphorbia oerstediana*, and with the conviction the enormous association known as *Euphorbia* (with over 1500 species) was both too unwieldly and morphologically too diverse to be held within a single genus, Ward (Novon 11: 361-362. 2001) formed the new combination *Agaloma oerstediana* (Kl. & Gke.) D. B. Ward, and reported that species as a member of the Florida flora.

The plant has rapidly expanded its Florida range, always found initially in association with greenhouse detritus but also soon appearing in landscape plantings. From its original Dade County location, by 1999 it was found in Palm Beach and Broward counties (D. F. Austin,

pers. comm.) and by 2001 had reached Alachua County (R. Abbott, pers. comm.), thus now is at least sparingly present throughout the Florida peninsula.

All specimens seen from within the state have now been identified as *Euphorbia graminea*. Present identification is based on the key and description by Michael Huft (Flora de Nicaragua, 1: 880-882. 2001) and the extended discussion of its variations within Mexico by Rogers McVaugh (Contr. Univ. Mich. Herb. 19: 220-227. 1993). The glabrous capsules and small (<2 mm.) coarsely alveolate seeds are definitive of *E. graminea* (vs. the pubescent capsules and larger (2.5-3.0 mm.) finely patterned seeds of *E. oerstediana*).

Other authors have placed *Euphorbia graminea* (as well as *E. oerstediana*) in *Euphorbia* subgen. *Agaloma* (G. L. Webster, J. Arnold Arbor. 48: 303-430. 1967). Less often, these species and their allies have been treated as generically distinct, as *Agaloma* Rafinesque. The merit of distinct generic placement has been discussed by Ward (2001), with the suggestion that the unique structure of the cyathial inflorescence has overridden conflicting criteria that would otherwise justify generic ranking.

Thus, to retain the generic placement accorded related Florida species, and to correct the misidentification given the first discoveries, the following new name is formed:

***Agaloma graminea* (Jacquin) D. B. Ward, comb. nov.**

Basionym: *Euphorbia graminea* Jacquin, Sel. Stirp. Amer. 151. 1763 (holotype: *icon*, Obs. Bot. 2: 5, pl. 31. 1767).

This seemingly innovative recognition of *Agaloma* is less iconoclastic when considered alongside other segregates of *Euphorbia*, two of which are commonly recognized as quite sufficiently distinct to carry generic rank. Within Florida, equivalent status is merited by *Chamaesyce* S. F. Gray, *Poinsettia* Graham, and *Tithymalus* Gaertner. By this treatment, *Euphorbia* L., s. str., is mostly restricted to Old World succulents and is wholly excluded from the Florida flora.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to Dan H. Nicolson for his help in examining the appropriate holdings of the National Herbarium, and to Derek Burch and Dan F. Austin for their early interest in identification of this new Floridian.