



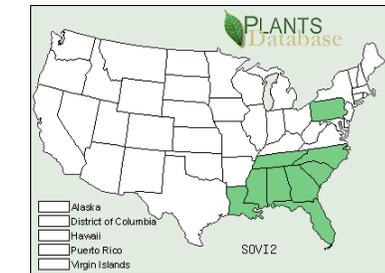
# Tropical Soda Apple

*Solanum viarum* Dunal

**Common Names:** tropical soda apple, sodom apple

**Native Origin:** southern Brazil, Paraguay and northern Argentina

**Description:** A perennial, broadleaf shrub in the potato family (*Solanaceae*) growing 3-6 feet in height. Stems, leaves, flower stalks, and calyxes have broad-based white to yellow prickles 0.4 inches long. Oak leaf-shaped leaves are alternate, 4-8 inches long and 2.4-6 inches wide, and deeply divided into broad, pointed lobes. Clusters of tiny white flowers with yellow stamens are borne a few together on stems below the leaves. Immature fruit are pale with dark green veins and resemble immature watermelons. Mature fruit are yellow, glabrous, globe-shaped, and 1-to-1.5 inches in diameter. The sweet smell of the fruit attracts livestock and wildlife that eat and spread the seed. Each plant can produce approximately 50,000 seeds. It reproduces primarily by seed, but can also spread by roots.



**Habitat:** It is located in open semi-shaded areas such as pastures, ditch banks, roadsides, recreational areas, citrus groves, sugar cane fields, and wet areas of rangeland. It is typically found in soils that are poorly drained and sandy, but cannot survive extremely wet soils.

**Distribution:** This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in FL, GA, and TN.

**Ecological Impacts:** Tropical soda apple is on the Federal Noxious Weed List (UUSDA NRCS). It reduces biological diversity in natural areas by displacing native plants and disrupting ecological integrity. Plant prickles can restrict wildlife grazing and create a physical barrier to animals, preventing movement through infested areas. It contains solasodine, which is poisonous to humans. This invader also serves as a host for viruses that infect important vegetable crops.

### Control and Management:



- **Manual-** Mowing can be used to stop fruit production; wear gloves when handling plants
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate, imazapyr or triclopyr. Collect and destroy fruit to prevent reestablishment. Follow label and state requirements.
- **Biological control:** The bacterial pathogen *Ralstonia solanacearum* (E. F. Smith) Yabuuchi is effective in causing plants to wilt and die as seen in the photo to the right.



**References:** www.forestimages.org, http://plants.usda.gov, www.nps.gov/plants/alien, www.invasive.org, Duncan, Celestine L. and Clark, Janet K. Invasive Plants of Range and Wildlands and their Environmental, Economic, and Societal Impacts, WSSA, 2005, p.188-195  
Miller, James H. Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests, A Field Guide for Identification and Control, USDA FS, SRS 62, p. 66-67, 84