

***Gundlachia corymbosa* (Urban) Britt. ex Boldingh**  
ASTERACEAE

yambush

Synonyms: *Baccharis dioica* sensu Duss  
*Gundlachia domingensis* var. *corymbosa* Urban



**General Description.**—Yambush, also known as horsebush, broombush, soldier's-bush, Jamaican trash, sereno, and bois-Guillaume, is an evergreen shrub to 1.5 m in height. Stems are typically slender, numerous, branched near the ground, and rooted at intervals where they touch the ground. The plant is supported by brown lateral and fine roots that are flexible and weak. The leaves are mostly clustered near the twig ends. The subsessile leaves are fleshy, sticky, oblanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, mostly rounded at the apex and 3 to 8 cm long by 0.5 to 2 cm wide. The terminal inflorescences are dense corymbs of heads on short peduncles. The involucre is about 5 mm long and surrounds five to nine white florets. Fruits are oblong, angular achenes with tawny pappus (Britton and Millspaugh 1962, Howard 1989, Liogier 1997).

**Range.**—Yambush is native to the Bahamas, Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Barbuda, Saba, Monserrat, Guadeloupe, La Désirade (Guadeloupe), Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire (Howard 1989, Liogier 1997). It is not

known to have been planted or naturalized elsewhere.

**Ecology.**—Seaside and small island habitat is normal for the species. Yambush mostly grows on shoreline rocks and cliffs in Puerto Rico. It was collected between rocks and gravel deposited at 40 to 50 m elevation in La Désirade (New York Botanical Garden 2003) and on calcareous silt with emergent limestone on Turks and Caicos (Darwin Institute 2002), and on rocky shores on San Salvador, Bahamas (Gerace and others 2003). Britton and Millspaugh (1962) indicate that it grows on sand dunes, pine lands, and borders of saline marshes. Yambush can grow in a wide variety of soils, gravel, and even in cracks in rocks. It is tolerant of salty soils, heavy salt spray, sea water overwash, and constant, sometimes high winds. Mean annual precipitation in its natural habitat varies from about 700 mm to 1,700 mm. It grows from near sea level to over 50 m in elevation. The species can grow with light overhead shade but generally grows where few other species can survive to avoid competition.

**Reproduction.**—Yambush probably blooms throughout the year. The seeds are small, produced in great numbers, and dispersed by the wind. Seedlings are uncommon, but once established in favorable environments, they layer profusely and form interconnected mats.

**Growth and Management.**—Yambush grows slowly. In seaside environments in Puerto Rico, it adds about 20 cm per year to its multiple stems. Individual plants and clumps apparently live for many years. The author knows of no reports of planting or management of the species. Because it is uncommon in much of its range, not aggressive, and grows in areas not normally used for agriculture or forestry, control of stands of the species should rarely be necessary.

**Benefits.**—Yambush adds to the aesthetics of sites where it grows, helps protect the soil, and furnishes cover for wildlife. Although there is no record of it having been used for ornamental

purposes, yambush seems an excellent choice for groundcovers and borders in seaside and xeric gardens. Poultices of crushed leaves relieve and help heal allergic dermatitis (Wood 2003).

## References

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John K. Francis, Research Forester, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, International Institute of Tropical Forestry, Jardín Botánico Sur, 1201 Calle Ceiba, San Juan, PR 00926-1119, in cooperation with the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, PR 00936-4984