

## Winged false buttonweed (491)

### Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Samoa.
- Aggressive, invasive weed of annual crops (maize, soybean, rice), plantations (sugarcane, rubber, tea), orchards, riverbanks, roadsides. A weed of cassava and taro in Pacific islands.
- Stems, erect or spreading, up to 1m, square, narrowly 'winged', woody at base, sometimes rooting. Leaves, broad, hairy, oval, leaf stalks absent or short; stipules with bristles. Flowers, in leaf axils and terminal, white, blue or mauve petals fused to form 5mm long tube. Fruit covered in white hairs. Seeds smooth with cavity. Long flowering time.
- Spread: seed contaminant of grain, livestock feed, plant nursery materials.
- Biosecurity: regulate imports of seeds, feeds and plant introductions.
- Biocontrol: none.
- Cultural control: hand-weed; cultivate to reduce surface seed germination.
- Chemical control: (soybean) - glyphosate + 2,4-D; glyphosate + 2,4-D + diclosulam, followed by glufosinate; imazethapyr. (oil palm and rubber) - glyphosate + picloram; glyphosphate + terbuthylazine; glufosinate, metsulfuron; (maize) - terbuthylazine.

### Common Name

Winged false buttonweed. It is also known as the broad-leafed buttonweed, broadleaf buttonweed. Note, this name is also given to *Spermocoe alata*, e.g., by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### Scientific Name

*Spermocoe latifolia*; previously, it was known as *Borreria latifolia*. Note, The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew lists this species separately from *Spermocoe alata*. According to RBG, *Spermocoe latifolia* has spread widely from South and Central America, including to the Pacific, whereas *Spermocoe alata* is a weed of South America alone. Some online websites suggest these two species are the same. It is a member of the Rubiaceae.



Photo 1. Field of winged false buttonweed, *Spermocoe latifolia* (Palau).



Photo 2. Winged false buttonweed, *Spermocoe latifolia*, among cassava (Fiji).



Photo 3. Winged false buttonweed, *Spermocoe latifolia*, among taro (Fiji).



Photo 4. Winged stem (and flowers) of winged false buttonweed, *Spermocoe latifolia*.



Photo 5. Leaves and flowers of winged false buttonweed, *Spermocoe latifolia*.



Photo 6. Close-up of flower, winged false buttonweed, *Spermacoce latifolia*.



Photos 7. Seeds, winged false buttonweed, *Spermacoce latifolia*. Note, the deep cavity on one side of the seed (labelled by USDA APHIS PPQ as *Spermacoce alata*).

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Information from *Spermacoce latifolia* Aubl. (2020) Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants. ([https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/spermacoce\\_latifolia.htm](https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/spermacoce_latifolia.htm)), and *Spermacoce alata*. Plants of the World online. Kewscience. (<http://www.plantsoftheworldonline.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:766585-1>); and *Spermacoce latifolia* Aubl. Plants of the world online. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. (<http://www.plantsoftheworldonline.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:766800-1>); and Wiersema JH, et al. (2017). A new weed in Florida, *Spermacoce latifolia* and the distinction between *S. alata* and *S. latifolia* (Spermacoceae, Rubiaceae). *Castanea* 82: 114-131; and *Spermacoce latifolia* (2013) Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER) ([http://www.hear.org/pier/species/spermacoce\\_latifolia.htm](http://www.hear.org/pier/species/spermacoce_latifolia.htm)); and CABI (2019) *Borreria latifolia* (broadleaf buttonweed). Invasive Species Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/9478>); and from Macanawai AR (2016) *Spermacoce latifolia* - a predominant alien invasive plant in root crops and its management in Loaivuna, Viti Levu, Fiji. *Acta Hort.* 1123, 215-220. (DOI: 10.17766/ActaHortic.2016.1123.30). Photos 1,4&6 Joel E Miles Ph.D. PO Box 1543, Republic of Palau 96940. Photos 2,3&5 Apatia R Macanawai, P.O Box 18462, Suva, Fiji. Photo 7 USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org.jpg.

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