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Citrus and Peach Production

CITRUS WEED SPOTLIGHT

Cupid’s shaving brush, Florida tassel
(Emilia fosbergii)

By Stephen H. Futch and David W. Hall

Life cycle: herbaceous annual
Plant height: to 2.5 feet tall
Leaves: mostly basal, alternate, toothed margins, blade tip wider, basal leaves winged, upper leaves usually at least somewhat clasping stem
Stem: unbranched or often branched, erect, smooth near top, hairy at base; from a taproot
Flowers: in cylindrical flower heads, each head to three-quarter inch long, on long stalks; crimson or bright scarlet rays occur at top of heads, poking out like shaving brush bristles; flowering year-round
Fruit: nutlet, five-angled, tiny bumps on the angles, numerous soft bristles at top

Distribution: throughout peninsular Florida
Comment: The dazzlingly bright crimson red flowers are small but very conspicuous

Stephen H. Futch is a multi-county Extension agent at the Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred; David W. Hall is a botanist in Gainesville.

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