

# CITRUS WEED SPOTLIGHT

## Heartwing sorrel, sour dock (*Rumex hastatulus*)

By Stephen H. Futch and David W. Hall

**Life cycle:** winter annual or short-lived perennial

**Plant height:** one-half to 3 feet tall; from yellow taproot

**Leaves:** alternate, chiefly basal, somewhat arrowhead-shaped; three-lobed, lower leaves with stalk

**Stem:** smooth, erect

**Flowers:** occur in elongated, branched clusters at tips of stems; small, one-tenth inch wide, greenish, pink to purple-red, becoming reddish as fruit matures; flowers in spring; male and female flowers are on separate plants; female flowers have outer sepals

**Seeds:** Three-sided nutlet, one-sixteenth inch long and almost as wide; enclosed in three papery wings

**Growth characteristics:** fast growing, tends to waste away as summer heat begins

**Distribution:** common on sandy



soils; ranges from New York into Mexico, primarily found throughout coastal plain of the southeastern United States; from the central peninsula north in Florida

**Comments:** reproduces only by seeds; a common weed in sandy pastures and citrus; a valuable wild bird food; often found in dense masses, becoming a spectacular wildflower, especially in old fields

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