

## ***Caesalpinia bonduc*** **Nickerbean, Gray Nicker**

**Family: Fabaceae**



Floret, fruit, and seed

Early December

S.H. Brown

### **Nickerbean**

**Synonym:** *C. bonducella*; *C. crista*, *Guilandina bonduc*, *G. bonducella*

**Origin:** Native to S. Florida. Pan-Tropical

**USDA Zone:** 9, 10 and 11

**Growth Rate:** Fast

**Flowering Months:** Intermittently, year-round

**Leaf Persistence:** Evergreen

**Messiness:** N/A

**Salt Tolerance:** High

**Drought Tolerance:** High

**Soil:** Wide range

**Nutritional Requirements:** Low

**Potential Pests:** None known

**Typical Dimensions:** Climbing bush to 20'

**Propagation:** Seed

**Human hazards:** Thorny stem and fruit

**Uses:** This plant is a food source for larvae of the rare Miami Blue butterfly.



Bee nectaring inflorescence.  
Late November

S.H. Brown



Upright inflorescence and growth habit. Plant growing on beach sand.  
Late November

S.H. Brown

The stem of his prickly, aggressive, leguminous, climbing bush can grow to 2 inches or more in diameter and 18 to 20 feet in length. It is commonly found growing in coastal areas including tropical scrub, hammocks and mangroves. An opportunistic bush, nickerbean often grows to great heights by clamoring over other plants. The yellow, five-petaled florets occur year-round in clusters. Prickled, flattened seed pods appear in the fall, grow to about four inches in length and turn from green to brown, when they open and release 2 or 3 one-inch long seeds. The smooth beans, popular with sea bean collectors, are gray at maturity and have been used over the centuries in crafts and folk medicine.



The seed pod is armed with many prickles and a single prominent prickle



Clusters of seed pods

S.H. Brown  
Early December



Even Bipinnate leaf with 3-9 pairs of opposite pinnae



Armed stem and stipules



Florets on inflorescence



Inflorescence in form of raceme



Group of inflorescence



A single prominent prickle



Seeds in a pod

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