**Abrus precatorius** L.
*Fabaceae (Leguminosae)/Pea Family*

**Common Names:** Rosary pea, crab's eyes, precatory pea, licorice vine  
**Synonymy:** *Abrus abrus* (L.) W. F. Wight  
**Origin:** India, and perhaps other parts of tropical Asia

**Botanical Description:** High-climbing, twining, or trailing woody vine with slender herbaceous branches. Leaves alternate, petioled, 5-13 cm (2-5 in) long, even-pinnately compound with 5-15 pairs of leaflets, these oval to oblong, to 1.8 cm (< 1 in) long, with margins entire. Flowers shaped like pea flowers, white to pink or reddish, small, in short-stalked dense clusters at leaf axils. Fruit a short, oblong pod, splitting before falling to reveal 3-8 shiny hard seeds, 6-7 mm (< 1 in) long, scarlet with black bases.


**Distribution:** Now pantropical (Isely 1990). Common across central and south Florida; herbarium specimens of naturalized populations collected from 27 counties, from Hernando, Marion, Lake, and Volusia counties south to the Keys (Wunderlin et al. 1995). Reported from over 40 natural areas in Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, Indian River, Highlands, Collier, Lee, Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough, and Lake counties (EPPC 1996).

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*Compound leaves*
**Life History:** Roots deeply and tenaciously, difficult to eradicate (R. Moyroud, Mesozoic Landscapes, 1995 personal communication). Increases in population size following fire (Maithani et al. 1986). Flowers in summer, fruiting prolifically. Seeds dispersed by birds (Austin 1998). Has been investigated for various types of usable extracts, such as for insecticides (e.g., Khanna et al. 1989), antifertility drugs (e.g., Sinha 1990), other medicines (e.g., Wambebe and Amosun 1984), and sweetening agents (Jakinovich et al. 1990).