



Scientific Note

First record of *Fatoua villosa* (Moraceae) in Brazil, a potentially invasive species

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Abstract: This study reports the first occurrence of *Fatoua villosa* in Brazilian territory. Given its history as a weed in ornamental plant nurseries outside its native range, it is recommended that seedling production companies learn to recognize the species in order to prevent its spread within the country.

Keywords: weed; seedling production; naturalized flora; Rio Grande do Sul.

Resumo: (Primeiro registro de *Fatoua villosa* (Moraceae) no Brasil, uma espécie potencialmente invasora.) Este estudo relata o primeiro registro de *Fatoua villosa* em território brasileiro. Considerando seu histórico como erva daninha em viveiros de plantas ornamentais fora de sua área de distribuição nativa, recomenda-se que as empresas de produção de mudas aprendam a reconhecer a espécie, a fim de evitar sua disseminação no país.

Palavras-chave: ervas daninhas; produção de mudas; flora naturalizada; Rio Grande do Sul.

Fatoua villosa (Thunb.) Nakai (1927), commonly known as mulberry weed or crabweed, is an annual herbaceous species which belongs to the Moraceae family. It is native to East Asia, some Pacific islands, and Northern Australia, where it has been reported as a weed in agricultural areas, roadsides and open forests (Vincent, 1993; POWO, 2026).

The first records of *Fatoua villosa* in the United States were reported in the 1960s, initially identified as an invasive plant in greenhouses and cultivated areas in Louisiana (Thieret, 1964). Later, the species expanded its distribution and became widespread in other U.S. states (Carter et al., 1990; Reznicek, 2001; Miller & Wood, 2003; Vincent, 2004). Recently, Bulacio & Slanis (2025) recorded the species for the first time in Argentina, thus constituting the first record for South America.

The dispersal of *Fatoua villosa* occurs through ballistic fruits, with seeds capable of reaching distances of up to 1.20 m from the parent plant (Penny & Neal, 2003; Zhang et al., 2019). According to Vincent (1993), the species was observed infesting flower beds and greenhouses, suggesting that its spread may occur through con-

taminated soil or horticultural substrates.

A batch of ornamental plants was purchased from a commercial nursery in the city of Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul and after a period of cultivation, the germination and development of several *F. villosa* seedlings were observed. These seedlings reached maturity and produced flowers. After a review of herbarium specimens and specialized literature, the first record of *Fatoua villosa* in Brazilian territory was confirmed. The origin of the individuals is unknown; however, it is likely that they came from nurseries and were transported as seeds mixed within the substrate contained in the pots of cultivated plants.

Studied material: BRAZIL. Rio Grande do Sul. Santa Maria, February 28, 2025, L. F. Lima, 1279 (HNIM 2654). (Figure 1)

Considering the invasive history of *F. villosa* in the United States, along with its rapid growth and high seed production it is clear that preventive measures are required in nurseries producing ornamental plants. Regular monitoring of flower beds, greenhouses and propagation areas are essential to detect the presence of the species and prevent its spread.



Figure 1: Herbarium specimen of *Fatoua villosa* incorporated into the HNIM herbarium. (Photograph taken by the author)

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