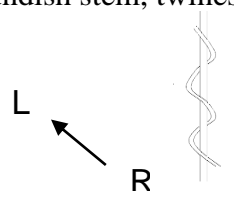

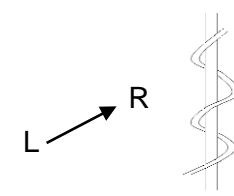





Yams that Occur in Florida

There are six species of yams (plants in the family Dioscoreaceae, note that sweet potatoes are not yams in a botanical sense) that occur in Florida, including air potato and 3 other exotics, and two native species, *Dioscorea floridana* and *Dioscorea villosa*. The table below provides information and characteristics for each species. Air potato can be distinguished from the other species by the shape of the leaf and stem, the presence of bulbils and the right to left twinning of the vine.

Species	Origin	Distribution in Florida	Bulbils present	Distinguishing characters	Leaf image
Air potato <i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>	Asia, Africa	Throughout	Yes	Roundish stem, twines to the left 	
Winged yam <i>Dioscorea. alata</i>	Asia	Throughout	Yes	Square stem, twines to the right 	
Zanzibar yam <i>Dioscorea. sansibarensis</i>	Africa	Collier and Miami-Dade counties, rare	Yes	Leaf margins 3-5 lobed, leaf apex caudate (extending in a slender tail-like appendage)	
Chinese yam <i>Dioscorea polystachya</i>	India	Alachua Co., rare	Yes	Leaf margins 3 lobed, apex acute or with a short projection at tip	



Wild yam, fourleaf yam <i>Dioscorea villosa</i>	USA	Alachua Co. and western panhandle, rare	No`	Rhizomes brownish, nodes not articulate	
Florida yam <i>Dioscorea floridana</i>	USA	Northern and central peninsula, central panhandle	No	Rhizomes yellowish, nodes articulate Low climbing, small plant	

Photo credits: *D. polystachya* leaf, Mr. Rob Broekhuis. *D. sansibarensis* leaf, Mr. Kwan Han at www.NatureLoveYou.sg. All others, W. A. Overholt.