**Borrichia frutescens** (L.) A.P. de Condolle

**Sea Marigold**

**Other Common Names:** Bushy Seaside Tansy, Sea Daisy, Sea Oxeye, Sea Oxeye Daisy.

**Family:** Asteraceae (Compositae).

**Cold Hardiness:** Cold tolerance has not been fully determined for *B. frutescens*, but based on its native range and our trials, the stems are evergreen in USDA cold hardness zones 9 to 13, stems become deciduous in zone 8, and plants often return as herbaceous perennials from the root system in zone 7.

**Foliage:** Opposite, simple oblanceolate, obovate to nearly spatulate; entire to shallowly dentate/serrate on portions of the blade; rarely with small toothy lobes at the base; nearly glaucous in appearance due to minutely fine hairs on the blades; blades vary in length from 1” to 2 1/2” (3”) and in width to ¼” (1”) and are essentially sessile or with a thickened base that is almost a petiole (subpetiolar base); blades are thick and fleshy textured with a subtly pleasant scent when crushed or bruised; the venation is 3-veined and the sap has a bit of an oily feel; overall textures range from medium to medium coarse and overall foliage colors vary from medium green, bluish green, to gray-green in color.

**Flower:** The composite flowers are hemispherical with small yellow perfect disk flowers tightly compacted in a raised central cluster and horizontally oriented showy pistillate ray flowers of varying shades of yellow present in a single ring around the periphery of the inflorescence; ray flower petals are shallowly three-toothed at the tips; inflorescences vary in size from about 1” to 2½” in diameter; flowers occur whenever temperatures permit, with continuous conspicuous flowering usually present from late spring through late-fall; flower size, precocity, profuseness, and showiness vary among genotypes.

**Fruit:** Prickly composite heads 1” to 2½” (2½”) in diameter of small thin wedge-shaped three to four sided ⅛” long achenes tend to be retained on the plants; while these are not ornamental, many genotypes tend to grow over these, producing new foliage and flowers which hide the older clusters of achenes in the interior of the plant; subtending involucral bracts have mucronate or short spiny tips.

**Stem / Bark:** Stems — stiffly ascending, nearly glabrous-glaucous to grayish pubescent on new growth, twigs remain green for an extended time, and can be somewhat brittle; Buds — vegetative buds are tiny, foliose, green then gray-brown, and nearly hidden in the axis of the stem and petiole; floral buds are terminal with green bracts opening to expose the composite flower; bracts may have small prickles; Bark — eventually gray-brown to tan-brown.

**Habit:** In nature plants typically occur as suckering colonies rather than individual plants, spreading from rhizomes; in cultivation, *B. frutescens* can be grown as a single shrub with a rounded to upright oval outline or allowed to proliferate to form a colony; in USDA zones 9(8) to 11 it grows as a small shrub to 36” tall, while in more northern regions *B. frutescens* functions as a subshrub, herbaceous perennial, or summer annual, typically staying under 18” to 24” in height.

**Cultural Requirements:** Plants are easily grown in most soils in a mostly sunny location; although drought tolerant and able to grow in lower fertility sites, plants will respond with increased growth rates when supplemental irrigation and fertilization are judiciously applied; tolerance to both foliar and soil salinity exposure are high, with plants often found where exposure to ocean waves and salt spray can periodically occur and plants can be found in marshy areas where soil drainage is suspect.

**Pathological Problems:** No significant pathological problems have been reported, although occasional infestations of mealy bugs can occur in greenhouse environments.

**Ornamental Assets:** Handsome clean foliage, a wide range of site adaptability, and showy yellow composite flowers over much of the growing season are major reasons to growth this species.

**Limitations & Liabilities:** This species can sucker to form colonies, older fruit clusters tend to be retained on the plants and are prickly, and shrubs tend to lose their evergreen nature outside of nearly subtropical locations.

**Landscape Utilization:** Ideal for bank covers and areas where soil or dune stabilization are issues; plantings can be used as a tall groundcover, either shorn periodically or permitted to grow with a natural form; as long as one is willing to control the occasional sucker, *B. frutescens* can be used as a general purpose small shrub in warmer parts of our region or in mixed perennial and annual plantings in colder locations; the excellent heat and drought tolerance, handsome foliage, and ability to flower from young plants, makes this a good candidate for patio container use.
Other Comments: I think that this species has many up sides that will be increasingly appreciated as pressures mount in the landscape trade for low input requiring shrubs and groundcovers; the genus name honors the Danish botanist Ole Borch, which as Latinized to Borrichius, while the specific epithet refers to the plants shrub-like growth habit.

Native Habitat: North American coastal and near coastal locations from Mexico and West Indies to the mid-Atlantic states.

Related Taxa: The subtropical to tropical genus Borrichia Adanson consists of about five species of herbaceous perennials and woody shrubs; Borrichia arborescens (L.) A.P. de Candole (Buphthalmum arborescens), Silver Sea-Oxeye, Tree Seaside Oxeye, or Tree Seaside Tansy, is not often listed as native to Texas, but is to Florida, and specimens with characteristics intermediate between these species are occasionally found on the Texas coast; Borrichia arborescens is similar to B. frutescens but larger, 24” to 48” tall, has larger 2” to 4” long leaves, and is less cold tolerant, USDA cold hardiness zones 10(9) and 13; a hybrid between B. arborescens × B. frutescens has been described as Borrichia × cubana Britton & S.F. Blake.

References: Brown, 1945; Correll and Johnston, 1979; Everitt and Drawe, 1993; Foote and Jones, 1989; Richardson, 2002; Tveten and Tveten, 1993.

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