It's in the Bag

by Gerardo Celis and Corrie Pieterson

University of Florida graduate student Gerardo Celis has created a new tool to assist in the removal and transport of invasive exotic plant material, Tyvek® bags. Celis and fellow student Corrie Pieterson have been removing exotic plants, primarily coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*), from the hardwood hammock section of the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory (NATL) on the University of Florida campus in Gainesville. *Smilax* spp. and other thorny vegetation were tearing holes in the plastic bags used to collect the plant material. In addition, the ardisia stems and roots tore the plastic bags from within. Torn bags are not only inconvenient and difficult to transport, but could also inadvertently spread the ardisia if fruits fell out of the holes.

With these concerns in mind, Celis designed a new collection bag made from DuPont Tyvek® material. He was inspired and helped by the Design 4 Development group in the Graphic Design department at UF, which has been working with this material since 2008. The group, directed by Associate Professor Maria Rogal, explores alternative materials for diverse uses (see www.design4development.org). Tyvek® was first implemented by student Abby Chryst under the Design 4 Development group as protective rain clothes and gear for indigenous Mayan communities in Mexico. The material is lightweight yet durable, and is much more resistant to tearing. The weed collection bag is reusable and has held up well over several trips into the hammock.

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