

Florida's Native Bromeliads:

Northern Needleleaf



Scientific name:

Tillandsia balbisiana J.A. & J.H. Schultes

Other common names:

Inflated wild pine; reflexed wild pine; cuttlefish; Balbis' airplant

Status in Florida: Threatened

Threats to this plant in

Florida: Mexican bromeliad weevil (*Metamasius callizona*) and habitat destruction



Distribution: Florida, Mexico, West Indies, Central and South America

Distribution in Florida: Orange, Osceola, Polk, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, DeSoto, Highlands, Okeechobee, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Glades, Charlotte, Lee, Hendry, Palm Beach, Broward, Collier, Monroe, and Miami-Dade Counties

Occurrence in Florida: Occasional

Habitat: Scrub, pinelands, strand swamp, hammocks, mangrove, shell ridges/mounds (often in open woods)

Description: Tank epiphyte; grows to 70 cm (28 in.) tall, singly or in clusters; 15-30 leaves, leathery, grayish in appearance because of scales, may be reddish; leaves slightly bulbous at base and tapering and curved or twisted at ends; flower spike usually with 2-10 lateral branches; scape 8-30 cm (3-12 in.); floral bracts (5-20 mm [1/4 - 3/4 in.] long) may be bright red, with violet petals (5-30 flowers per plant); seed capsules up to 4.5 cm (1 3/4 in.) long

Time of flowering: Fall to summer, especially early spring

References

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