

Florida's Native Bromeliads:

Spanish Moss



Scientific name:

Tillandsia usneoides L.

Former name:

Dendropogon usneoides (L.) Eaf.

Status in Florida:

Not listed as threatened

Threats to this plant in Florida:

None



Distribution: From southeast U.S. (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas) to central Argentina and Chile (Spanish moss has the broadest geographical range of any bromeliad)

Distribution in Florida: All counties in Florida

Occurrence in Florida: Common

Habitat: Hammocks (usually on oaks), pinelands and scrub; prefers moist, brightly exposed habitats; can withstand extreme temperature fluctuation and low rainfall

Description: Epiphytic; rootless; abundantly branching; plants overlap on tree branches; plants usually 15-20 cm (6-8 in.) long (up to 45 cm [18 in.] long); leaves (3-5 cm [1-2 in.] long) not dilated at the base (1-2 mm [1/16 in.] wide); live leaves covered with gray-green scales; leaves greener when plant is in good health (gray leaves may indicate moisture stress or other environmental factors); flowers (usually one per plant) greenish-yellow and fragrant, lasting about 4 days; seed capsules 15-20 mm (1/2 -3/4 in.) long; seeds (2-23 per capsule) 2-3 mm (1/8 in.) long, with comate hairs; reproduces by seed and vegetative growth

Time of flowering: Spring (mainly April)

References

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