

Florida's Native Bromeliads:

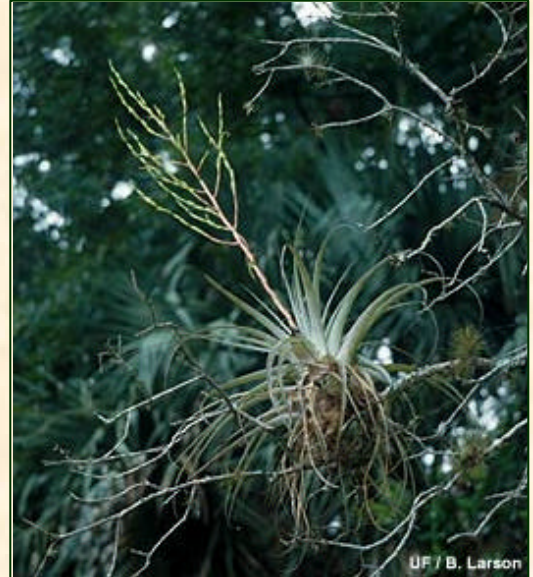
Giant Airplant

Scientific name: *Tillandsia utriculata* L.

Other common names: Giant wild pine; swollen wild pine; spreading airplant

Status in Florida: Endangered (listed as a result of Mexican bromeliad weevil attack)

Threats to this plant in Florida: Mexican bromeliad weevil (*Metamasius callizona*), illegal collecting, habitat destruction



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

Distribution in Florida: Northern limits are Putnam, Flagler, Sumter, Lake, and Citrus Counties (found in those and all counties south)

Occurrence in Florida: Frequent before weevil attack

Habitat: Dry and mesic hammocks, cypress swamps, pinelands (often found in brightly exposed habitats)

Description: Tank epiphyte (may grow terrestrially); plants grow singly, to 2m (6 ½ ft.) tall; 20-75 large, light green to gray-green leaves (up to 80 cm [31 in.] long) with wide base and scales; erect, zig-zag, branching flower spike 1-2 m (40-80 in.) long (5-40 branches); floral bracts green or purple tinged; 10-200 flowers, 4 cm (1 ½ in.) long; petals white at base, violet at end; seed capsules up to 5 cm (2 in.) long; monocarpic (produces single flower spike, releases seed and dies); low rate of vegetative reproduction; seeds wind dispersed; may live to 20 yrs.

Time of flowering: Spring to fall (especially summer); seeds are released the following year in late spring

References

- Coile, Nancy C. 2000. *Notes on Florida's Endangered and Threatened Plants*. FDACS/DPI, Bureau of Entomology, Nematology and Plant Pathology, Botany Section. Contribution No. 38, 3rd ed., Gainesville, FL.
<http://www.virtualherbarium.org/EPAC>
- Flora of North America Association. 2000. *Flora of North America, Vol. 22*.
<http://flora.huh.harvard.edu/FNA>
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory. 1997. *Matrix of Habitats and Distribution by County of Rare/Endangered Species of Florida*. Florida Natural Areas Inventory/The Nature Conservancy.
<http://www.fnai.org>
- Long, Robert W. and Olga Lakela. 1976. *A Flora of Tropical Florida*. Banyan Books, Miami.