

COMMON WILD-PINE

Tillandsia fasciculata Sw.

Synonyms: none

Family: Bromeliaceae (pineapple)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S4?

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-none



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Field Description: Rosette-forming **epiphyte** with stiff, leathery, gray-green **leaves**. This plant produces a short flowering stalk in April or May. Overlapping greenish bracts hide the stalk itself. The conspicuous **floral bracts** are red and contrast with the small violet flowers. Roots, while poorly developed, serve to anchor this epiphyte to a variety of hosts.

Similar Species: Common wild-pine can be distinguished from the other large, rosette-forming giant airplant (*Tillandsia utriculata*), by its leaves that are narrower at the base and its brightly colored inflorescence with overlapping floral bracts.

Related Rare Species: Common wild-pine can be distinguished from the other large, rosette-forming giant airplant (*Tillandsia utriculata*), by its leaves that are narrower at the base and its brightly colored inflorescence with overlapping floral bracts.

common wild-pine

Tillandsia fasciculata

Habitat: Swamps, hammocks, flatwoods, and the periphery of basin marshes and sloughs. Trees with thick-ridged bark allow for easier attachment and seedling recruitment. Common wild-pine is most often observed in bright light on cypress and live oak, often in association with other *Tillandsia* species.

Best Survey Season: (Spring) summer-fall.

Range-wide Distribution: Mexico, West Indies, Central and South America. In Florida, restricted to the central and south peninsula.

Conservation Status: The most serious threats to this species are the Mexican bromeliad weevil and conversion of its habitat to urban, suburban, or agricultural uses.

Protection and Management: The state of Florida lists this species and most other rosette-forming bromeliads as threatened or endangered. The Mexican bromeliad weevil (*Metamasius callizona*) has killed many plants since its accidental introduction in Broward County in 1989. This insect burrows into, and destroys, the leafy rosettes of this epiphyte. Since most *Tillandsia* species are slow to mature, protecting the trees in primary habitats will encourage the development of healthy epiphyte populations. Research has been conducted for possible biological control agents, and a test release of a parasitic fly was performed in 2007. Because common wild-pine is able to produce basal offshoots, it is somewhat more protected from decimation by the weevil.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011