

HIGHLANDS SCRUB HYPERICUM

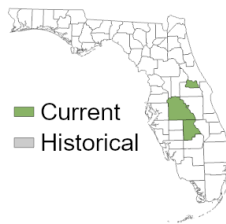
Hypericum cumulicola (Small) P. Adams

Synonyms: *Sanidophyllum cumulicola* Small

Family: Hypericaceae (St. John's-wort)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-Endangered; FL-Endangered



Leaf tiny (less than 0.6 cm long), scale-like, opposite, simple, entire; inflorescence a compound cyme (round-topped). Photo © Keith Bradley.

Field Description: Perennial **herb**, 20 - 71 cm tall, with 3 - 17 wiry, round **stems** rising from a taproot, stems dying back in winter to a cluster of short, non-flowering basal branches. **Leaves** tiny (less than 0.6 cm long), needle- or scale-like, opposite, simple, entire, gland-dotted. **Flowers** in upper forks and tips of stems, small with 5 yellow petals in a pinwheel and many stamens. **Fruit** pointed, opening into 3 curved, beaked segments, surrounded by 5 persistent, erect **sepals**.

Similar Species: Pinweed (*Hypericum gentianoides*) has similar leaves and flowers, but has a single, wing-angled main stem and lacks the cluster of basal branches.

Related Rare Species: Two other rare related species in the state are Edison's ascyrum (*Hypericum edisonianum*) and smooth-barked St. John's-wort (*Hypericum lissophloeus*) can be differentiated from Highlands scrub hypericum by the leaf articulation at the base which Highlands scrub hypericum does not have.

Highlands Scrub hypericum

Hypericum cumulicola

Habitat: Open patches in white sand scrubs and rosemary balds; occasionally in openings in scrubby flatwoods and oak scrubs over yellow sands; abundant after fires.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to Lake Wales Ridge in Polk, Seminole, and Highlands counties, FL.

Conservation Status: There are 33 extant occurrences of Highlands scrub hypericum in Florida. This species occurs in an extremely limited range, requires open sand habitat within Florida scrub, and appropriate fire return intervals to maintain habitat patchiness and sandy openings. The Lake Wales Ridge area is heavily fragmented by development, citrus groves, cattle ranches, and mining operations, contributing to a long-term decrease of more than 80 percent of the scrub habitat.

Protection and Management: Purchase and manage private sites for conservation. Manage sites with prescribed fire to reduce shrub and lichen cover, and to maintain habitat patchiness. Monitor effects of fire.

References: Coile 2000, Dolan et al. 1999, Quintana-Ascencio and Menges 1996, 2000; Quintana-Ascencio and Morales-Hernández 1997, Quintana-Ascencio et al. 1998, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024.



Flowers small with 5 yellow petals in a pinwheel. Photo © Scott Ward.

