

EDISON'S ASCYRUM

Hypericum edisonianum (Small) P. Adams & Robson

Synonyms: *Ascyrum edisonianum* Small

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

FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2S3

Legal Status: US-none; FL-Endangered



Shrub rhizomatous-colonial growing up to 1.5 m tall. Bark of older stems gray to black, tight and smooth; leaves 1 - 2 cm wide. Taken at Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area. Photo by Dexter Sowell.

Field Description: **Styles** and **carpels** 3 (rarely 4); **leaves** (5-) 7 - 20 mm wide; **leaves** rounded or subcordate at the base; **large outer sepals** acute and apiculate at the apex; **shrub** rhizomatous-colonial, to 1.5 m tall; **bark** of older stems gray to black, tight and smooth.

Similar Species: St. Andrew's-cross (*Hypericum crux-andreae*) and St. Peter's-wort (*Hypericum hypericoides*) both have leaves that are green, not silvery, with gland dots on both surfaces but no glands at leaf bases. Four-petal hypericum (*Hypericum tetrapetalum*) has clasping, heart-shaped leaves. All three similar species have peeling, reddish-brown bark.

Related Rare Species: Highlands scrub hypericum (*H. cumulicola*) and smoothbark St. John's-wort (*H. lissophloeus*).

Habitat: Depressions in scrub, cutthroat seeps, flatwoods ponds, lake margins, wet flatwoods, and wet prairies.

Edison's ascyrum

Hypericum edisonianum

Best Survey Season: Leaves and bark are identifiable year-round. Plants may flower year-round, though each individual flower is short-lived.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to central peninsular Florida - primarily in Highlands, and Glades counties but also De Soto, Polk, Charlotte, Collier, and Sarasota counties.

Conservation Status: Locally abundant on the southern part of the Lake Wales Ridge in depression marshes, forming thickets, but found at only a few dozen sites within a limited range. Habitat has been lost to wetland drainage, fire suppression, pasture improvement, and grazing.

Protection and Management: Allow prescribed fires to burn into wetlands. Maintain natural hydrology in flatwoods. Exclude off-road-vehicles and cattle. Purchase and preserve scrub habitat.

References: Adams 1957, Adams and Robson 1961, Coile 2000, Godfrey and Wooten 1980, Nelson 1996, Tobe et al. 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.



Leaves 1 - 2 cm wide. Margin of wet prairie at Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

Edison's ascyrum

Hypericum edisonianum



Four large outer sepals ending abruptly in small, slender points. Margin of wet prairie at Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.



Shrub rhizomatous-colonial growing up to 1.5 m tall. Bark of older stems gray to black, tight and smooth; leaves 1 - 2 cm wide. Margin of depression marsh at Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Kelly Anderson.

