

## SMOOTHBARK ST. JOHN'S WORT

*Hypericum lissophloeus* P. Adams

**Synonyms:** none

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

**FNAI Ranks:** G2/S2

**Legal Status:** US-none; FL-Endangered



Brenda Herring



Gil Nelson

**Field Description:** **Shrub** to 4 m tall, with a single **trunk**, bushy crown, and **prop roots** at base; **bark** thin, smooth, shiny, chestnut-brown, becoming silvery-metallic and peeling off in thin, curling sheets. **Leaves** 1.3 - 1.9 cm long, needle-like, waxy, grayish green, and gland-pitted along inrolled margins; most leaves in clusters on spur shoots, some opposite. **Flowers** usually solitary, with many stamens and 5 yellow petals, each petal with a small tooth on the margin. **Fruit** 8 mm long, erect, pointed, three-lobed.

**Similar Species:** Marsh St. John's-wort (*Hypericum fasciculatum*) is less than 1.5 m tall, multi-branched, with gray bark peeling in strips; leaves bright green, not waxy; flowers usually in clusters of 3 or more. Shining St. John's-wort (*Hypericum nitidum*) has many bushy stems, with bark peeling in thin flakes or strips; leaves are bright green. Chapman's St. John's-wort (*Hypericum chapmanii*) has a tall, single trunk with thick, spongy, pinkish-brown bark at the base and bright green leaves.

**Related Rare Species:** See Edison's ascyrum (*Hypericum edisonianum*) and Highlands scrub hypericum (*Hypericum cumulicola*) in this guide.

**Habitat:** Plants grow along the shores and shallow water of sandhill upland lakes and karst ponds. Plants occur on the edges of the ponds which are regularly submerged at high water and exposed at low water. *H. lissophloeus* is typically the dominant shrub in these ponds, ranging from the shaded edges of cypress trees to the full sun and the center of the ponds. It can grow in water up to 1.5m deep. Typically, the species grows in acidic sandy substrate with a lot of peat.

**Best Survey Season:** Summer-fall; May to frost, but gray-green leaves, smooth, metallic silvery bark and prop roots are distinctive all year.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Endemic to Bay and Washington counties, FL.

**Conservation Status:** Several large stands are preserved at lakes and ponds on Water Management District property, but most populations are on private lands rapidly converting to lakeshore developments. This species is destroyed when the margins of lakes are scraped to create beaches.

**Protection and Management:** Prevent conversion of lakeshores to sandy beaches; preserve natural lakeshore vegetation. Halt erosion into lakes from upland development and logging.

**References:** Coile 2000, Godfrey and Wooten 1981, Kral 1983, Tobe et al. 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

