

PYGMY PIPES

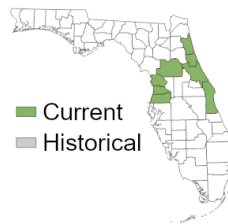
Monotropsis reynoldsiae (Gray) Heller

Synonyms: *Schweinitzia reynoldsiae* A. Gray

Family: Ericaceae (heath)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered



Alfred Schotz

Field Description: Perennial **herb**, lacking chlorophyll, parasitic on underground fungi that are associated with roots of trees. **Stems** 1.5 - 5 inches tall, fleshy; dull white, purplish, or brown; stems usually in clusters, at first curved, becoming erect with age. **Leaves** scale-like, less than 0.25 inch long, spiraled around the stem, same color as stem. **Flowers** several, at top of stem, nodding, white or lavender, slightly fragrant; **petals** united into a bell-shaped tube; **sepals** short, about half the length of flower. **Fruit** a small, dark pink berry.

Similar Species: *Monotropsis reynoldsiae* differs from the following closely related mycotrophic Ericaceae species as follows: Indianpipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) has lighter colored-stems, one white flower at top of stem and petals are separated; pinesap (*Monotropa hypopithys*), state-Endangered, has red-pink-yellow stems, several flowers at top of stem and separate petal. Common pygmy pipes (*Monotropsis odorata*) was previously reported as occurring in Florida but this has since been attributed to misidentification.

Related Rare Species: Pine-sap (*Monotropa hypopithys*), state-endangered, has yellow, pink, or red stems with several flowers at the top of the stem; petals are not united into a tube and fall soon after opening.

Habitat: Upland hardwood forests, hammocks, sand pine and oak scrub. At mesic sites, plants often occur with laurel oak (*Quercus hemisphaerica*) and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). At xeric sites, plants typically occur with various scrub oaks (*Quercus geminata*, *Q. myrtifolia*, and *Q. chapmanii*); parasitic on roots.

Best Survey Season: Winte; December - February.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to central Florida occurring from St. Johns and Volusia counties west to Marion, Citrus, and south to Hernando counties.

Conservation Status: Ten populations are currently known, most on conservation lands.

Protection and Management: Avoid all ground disturbance including foot traffic and use of heavy machinery and hand-pull any invasive plant species that grow where pygmy pipes are known to occur.

References: Chafin 2000, Ward 1979, Coile 2000, Epstein 1994, Rose and Freudenstein 2014, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Wunderlin et al. 2018.