

KEY TREE CACTUS

Pilosocereus robinii (Lem.) Byles & G.D. Rowley

Synonyms: *Cereus robinii* (Lem.) L.D. Benson

Pilosocereus robinii var. *deeringii* (Small) Kartesz & Gandhi

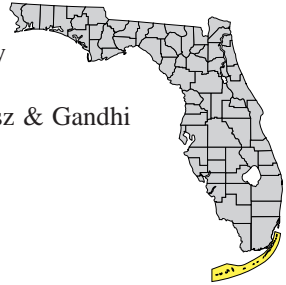
Cephalocereus keyensis Britton & Rose

Family: Cactaceae (cactus)

FNAI Ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US–Endangered FL–Endangered

Wetland Status: US–UPL FL–UPL



Gil Nelson

Field Description: Tree-like cactus with cylindrical stems to 30 feet tall, 3 - 4 inches in diameter, branched or unbranched, with 9 - 15 ribs. Spines less than 1 inch long, in hairy clusters of 15 - 30. Flowers solitary, 2 - 2.5 inches long, outer petals green, inner petals white, opening in late afternoon from spine clusters near top of stems, smelling of garlic. Fruit leathery, round, flattened, blue-green ripening to red, with shiny black seeds in white pulp.

Similar and Related Rare Species: Bahama tree cactus (*Pilosocereus bahamensis*) is known from a single colony in the Monroe County Keys. Plants 9 - 12 feet tall, stems with 10 - 11 ribs, much branched, 3 - 4 inches thick, with spines in clusters of 15 - 20; flowers blueish-brown outside, inner petals white to pink. Also see fragrant prickly apple (*Harrisia fragrans*) in this guide.

Key tree cactus

Pilosocereus robinii

Habitat: Openings in tropical hardwood hammocks, cactus hammocks, and thorn scrub, over oolitic limestone.

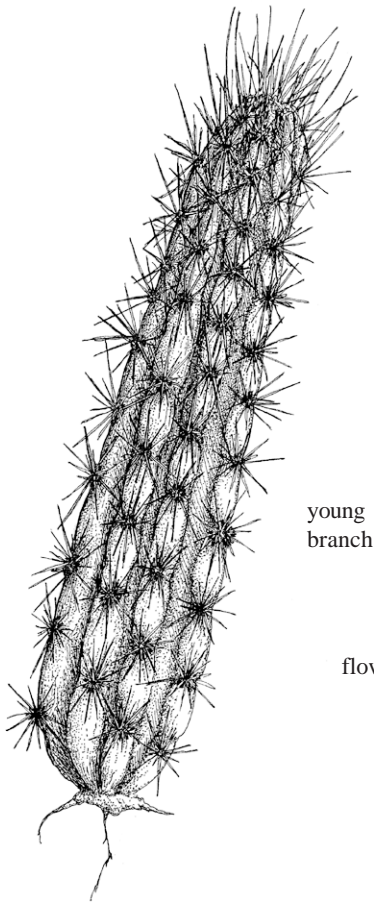
Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Monroe County Keys, FL; Cuba.

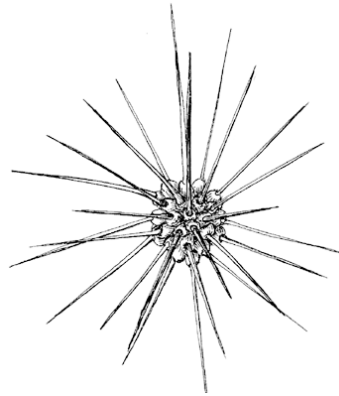
Conservation Status: Most plants reported from early 1900s were destroyed by development. Only 8 populations, with about 600 plants, remain; only 2 of the populations are considered stable or not threatened by development.

Protection & Management: Prevent destruction of upland habitat in the Keys. Protect and monitor known populations. Control exotic species such as Brazilian pepper and Australian pine. Deter and prosecute plant poachers.

References: Adams and Lima 1994, Austin 1984a, Avery 1982, Britton and Rose 1937, Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Small 1917, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, and Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.

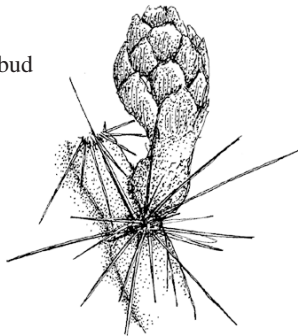


young
branch



cluster of spines

flower bud



J.C. Putnam H.