

## FUZZY-WUZZY AIR-PLANT

*Tillandsia pruinosa* Sw.

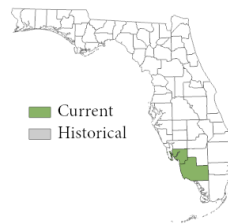
**Synonyms:** *Tillandsia breviscapa* A. Rich.

**Family:** Bromeliaceae (pineapple)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S1

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

**Wetland Status:** US-none+ FL-UPL



D. Karl

**Field Description:** "Airplant" (epiphyte) less than 6 inches tall, usually solitary, rarely in clumps, on branches of trees. **Leaves** densely covered with shaggy, scale-like hairs; crowded and overlapping, with inrolled margins; wide, inflated bases; and narrow, twisted, elongated tips. **Flower spike** short, with 3 - 12 flowers, pink bracts overlapping and covering the stalk. **Flower** less than 1 inch long, erect, with 3 purple petals. **Fruit** a narrow, elongated capsule, opening lengthwise into 3 segments; **seeds** with a long white plume.

**Similar Species:** This is the only bromeliad in FL densely covered with fuzzy scales.

**Related Rare Species:** Banded wild-pine (*Tillandsia flexuosa*), state-endangered, has spirally twisted, silver-striped leaves and a large, loosely-branched flower spike. It occurs in branches of trees in hammocks and dry woods. Once widespread, banded wild pine is now severely threatened by exotic weevils that destroy "tank

## **fuzzy-wuzzy air-plant**

*Tillandsia pruinosa*

bromeliads." Also see many-flowered catopsis (*Catopsis floribunda*) and Fakahatchee guzmania (*Guzmania monostachia*) in this guide.

**Habitat:** Wet hammocks and cypress swamps; epiphytic.

**Best Survey Season:** Spring-summer; recognizable all year.

**Range-wide Distribution:** FL, W. Indies, Mexico, Central and South America.

**Conservation Status:** Four occurrences are known, all on conservation lands. Populations have been decimated by plant poachers and draining of swamps and are threatened by an exotic weevil (*Metamazius callizona*) whose larvae tunnel through the plant bases, killing the plants.

**Protection and Management:** Enforce plant protection laws and prosecute plant poachers. Fund research into weevil control. Protect wetlands from draining, logging, and development.

**References:** Bennett 1982, Bennett [n.d.], Coile 2000, Correll and Correll 1982, FNA 2000, Frank 2000, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.