

MANY-FLOWERED CATOPSIS

Catopsis floribunda L.B. Sm.

Synonyms: *Pogospermum floribundum* Brong.

Family: Bromeliaceae (pineapple)

FNAI Ranks: G3G5/S1

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Catopsis floribunda

Gil Nelson

Catopsis nutans

Gil Nelson

Field Description: A large "airplant" (**epiphyte**) or "tank bromeliad," growing on tree trunks and branches. **Leaves** 8 - 16 inches long, bright green (not chalky), with long pointed tips, erect to spreading, forming an upright rosette, overlapping at the base and forming a cup that holds water. **Spikes** of 15 - 50 **flowers** with green sepals and erect, white petals emerge from the center of the plant; flowers open during the day.

Similar Species: All of FL's catopsis species are endangered. Nodding catopsis (*Catopsis nutans*) has 3 - 10 yellow flowers opening at night on a nodding, unbranched stalk; leaves are somewhat chalky and 3 - 6 inches long. Powdery catopsis (*Catopsis berteroniana*, see drawing) has yellow-green leaves covered with chalky powder. Also see fuzzywuzzy airplant (*Tillandsia pruinosa*) and Fakahatchee guzmania (*Guzmania monostachya*) in this guide.

many-flowered catopsis

Catopsis floribunda

Related Rare Species: None

Habitat: Tropical hammocks and cypress swamps in South Florida; epiphytic.

Best Survey Season: Fall - winter, but may be identified by leaves all year.

Range-wide Distribution: FL, West Indies, Central and South America.

Conservation Status: Many-flowered and powdery catopsis occur in 9 parks and preserves; nodding catopsis is known only from the Fakahatchee Strand. Tank bromeliads are seriously endangered by a Mexican weevil (*Metamazius callizona*) for which there is no known control. Plant poachers have also decimated native populations.

Protection and Management: Fund research into control of invasive weevils. Protect remaining fragments of tropical hammock. Enforce plant protection laws and prosecute plant poachers.

References: Coile 2000, Creel 2000, Frank 2000, Frank and Thomas 1996, Luther and Brown 2000, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.