

EDISON'S ASCYRUM

Hypericum edisonianum (Small) P. Adams & Robson

Synonyms: *Ascyrum edisonianum* Small

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

FNAI Ranks: G2G3/S2S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-OBL+ FL-OBL



Field Description: **Styles** and **carpels** 3 (rarely 4); **leaves** (5-) 7-20 mm wide; **leaves** rounded or subcordate at the base; **large outer sepals** acute and apiculate at the apex; **shrub** rhizomatous-colonial, to 15 dm tall; **bark** of older stems gray to black, tight and smooth.

Similar Species: St. Andrew's-cross (*Hypericum crux-andreae*) and St. Peter's-wort (*Hypericum hypericoides*) both have leaves that are green, not silvery, with gland dots on both surfaces but no glands at leaf bases. Four-petal hypericum (*Hypericum tetrapetalum*) has clasping, heart-shaped leaves. All three similar species have peeling, reddish-brown bark.

Related Rare Species: Highlands scrub hypericum (*H. cumulicola*) and smoothbark St. John's-wort (*H. lissophloeus*).

Edison's ascyrum

Hypericum edisonianum

Habitat: Depressions in scrub, cutthroat seeps, flatwoods ponds, lake margins, wet flatwoods, and wet prairies.

Best Survey Season: Leaves and bark are identifiable year-round. Plants may flower year-round, though each individual flower is short-lived.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to central peninsular Florida - primarily in Highlands, and Glades counties but also De Soto, Polk, Charlotte, Collier, and Sarasota counties.

Conservation Status: Locally abundant on the southern part of the Lake Wales Ridge in depression marshes, forming thickets, but found at only a few dozen sites within a limited range. Habitat has been lost to wetland drainage, fire suppression, pasture improvement, and grazing.

Protection and Management: Allow prescribed fires to burn into wetlands. Maintain natural hydrology in flatwoods. Exclude off-road-vehicles and cattle. Purchase and preserve scrub habitat.

References: Adams 1957, Adams and Robson 1961, Coile 2000, Godfrey and Wooten 1980, Nelson 1996, Tobe et al. 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.