

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT  
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Plant Abstract**

**Element Code:** PMBRO090E0

**Data Sensitivity:** No

**CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE**

**NAME:** *Tillandsia recurvata*

**COMMON NAME:** Ball moss

**SYNONYMS:** *Tillandsia uniflora*

**FAMILY:** Bromeliaceae

**AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION:** Linnaeus. 1762. Sp. Pl. 2nd ed. p.410.

**TYPE LOCALITY:**

**TYPE SPECIMEN:**

**TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS:** Arizona's only Bromeliad.

**DESCRIPTION:** Perennial epiphyte, the plants forming dense clumps on the branches of oaks and junipers. Leaves fascicled on short stem, 2.0-15.0 cm (0.8-6.0 in.) long, round in cross-section, 0.5-2.0 mm (0.02-0.08 in.) wide, gray-green. Flower stalk slender, 6.0-15.0 cm (2.4-6.0 in.) long, with 1-5 flowers. Sepals lance-shaped, pointed, 4.0-10.0 mm (0.16-0.4 in.) long. Petals pale violet to white, 12.0-16.0 mm (0.48-0.64 in.) long. Fruit, capsule 1.5-3.0 cm (0.6-0.12 in.) long, 2.0-2.5 mm (0.08-0.1 in.) wide.

**AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:**

**ILLUSTRATIONS:** Line drawing (Wiggins 1980).

**TOTAL RANGE:** Florida to Texas; southeastern Arizona south to Argentina and Chile.

**RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA:** Santa Cruz County: Sycamore Canyon and Flux Canyon, Patagonia Mountains, Pine Canyon, Atascosa Mountains. Graham County: Redfield Canyon.

**SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS**

**GROWTH FORM:** Perennial epiphyte or arboreal parasite

**PHENOLOGY:**

**BIOLOGY:** Parasitic plant.

**HABITAT:** On branches of oaks and junipers or on rocks, and on protected canyon hillsides.

**ELEVATION:** 4,000 - 5,000 ft.

**EXPOSURE:** Various

**SUBSTRATE:** Tree branches and rock faces

**PLANT COMMUNITY:** *Juniperus monosperma*, *Celtis reticulata*, *Rhus trilobata*, *Fouquieria splendens*, *Anisicanthus thurberi*.

**POPULATION TRENDS:** The population in Sycamore Canyon is declining due to collecting.

### **SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

**ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS:**

**STATE STATUS:**

**OTHER STATUS:**

**MANAGEMENT FACTORS:** Collection is threat.

**CONSERVATION MEASURES TAKEN:**

**SUGGESTED PROJECTS:** Continuation of plant monitoring.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** USDA Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy.

### **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

**LITERATURE CITATIONS:**

Correll and Johnston. 1970. Manual of the vascular plants of Texas. Texas Research Foundation. Renner, TX. p. 356.

Mason, C.T. Jr. 1968. Madroño. 19:224.

Shreve and Wiggins. 1964. Vegetation and flora of the Sonoran Desert. Stanford University Press. Stanford, CA. p.330.

Toolin, L.J., T.R. Van Devender and J.M. Kaiser. 1979. Journal of the Arizona-Nevada Academy of Science.

Wiggins, I.L. 1980. Flora of Baja California. Stanford University Press. Stanford, CA. p.1025.

**MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:**

A. Harlan. Tucson, AZ (Master's thesis, University of Arizona).  
T.R. Van Devender. Arizona Natural Heritage Program, Tucson, AZ.  
J. Kaiser. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nogales, AZ.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Van Devender: Redfield Canyon population very healthy; probably best in state.  
Wiggins: Dried masses of this plant have been used to stuff mattresses and saddle pads.

**Revised:** 1992-12-09 (JSP)

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