

FRAGRANT PRICKLY APPLE

Harrisia fragrans Small

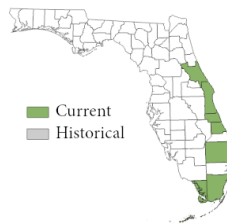
Synonyms: ; *Harrisia eriophora* (N.E. Pfeiffer) Britt.; ; *Harrisia eriophora* (N.E. Pfeiffer) Britt. var. *fragrans* (Pfeiffer & Otto) Britton (Small ex Britton & Rose) D. B. Ward

Family: Cactaceae (cactus)

FNAI Ranks: G1/S1

Legal Status: US-Endangered FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-none+ FL-UPL



Billy B. Boothe

Field Description: Erect tree cactus, with slender, cylindrical, spiny **stems** 3 - 16 feet tall, with 10 or more ridges, sometimes branched or leaning. **Spines** gray with yellow tips, 9 - 13 per cluster, 1 - 1.5 inches long, one spine longer than the others. **Flowers** showy, solitary, 5 - 8 inches long, with a long, scaly floral tube; **petals** numerous, long and narrow, fragrant, white when flowers open at night and turning pink the next morning; inner petals without teeth at the tip. **Fruits** usually one per plant, red, round, 2 inches across, with woolly spines.

Similar Species: None

Related Rare Species: Simpson's prickly apple (*Harrisia simpsonii*), found on FL's

fragrant prickly apple

Harrisia fragrans

east coast in mangroves and in coastal thickets and strands, is quite similar to fragrant prickly apple but lacks the single, conspicuous, long spine; spines 7 - 14 per cluster, yellow with dark tips, 0.5 - 1 inch long; inner petals toothed at apex; fruits red. Aboriginal prickly apple (*Harrisia aboriginum*) occurs on FL's SW coast on shell mounds; spines 7 - 9 per cluster, less than 0.5 inch long, inner petals toothed; fruits yellow.

Habitat: Scrubby flatwoods and xeric hammocks on the Atlantic Coastal Ridge, with sand live oak, myrtle oak, cabbage palm, and prickly pear.

Best Survey Season: Flowers April - May and September - October; fruits July - October.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to FL; this species now occurs only in St. Lucie County. Historically it was reported from as far north as Brevard County and also in Monroe County Keys and mainland.

Conservation Status: Fragrant prickly apple occurs in 1 preserve.

Protection and Management: Preserve upland coastal habitats; monitor known populations; protect plants from off-road-vehicles and plant poachers with fences; remove exotic species; avoid use of herbicides in right-of-way maintenance; effect of fire is unknown.

References: Austin 1984a, Benson 1982, Coile 2000, IRC 1999, Rae 1995, Small 1920, Small 1935, USFWS 1998, Ward 1979, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.