

SIMPSON'S PRICKLY APPLE

Harrisia simpsonii Small

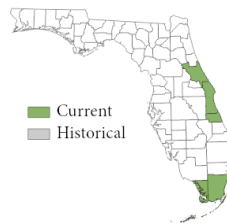
Synonyms: none

Family: Cactaceae (cactus)

FNAI Ranks: G2/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-none

Wetland Status: US-FACU*+ FL-UPL



Camille Eckel

Field Description: **Stems** 9-10 ridged, simple or branched, often vine-like or terrestrial; spines 0.39-0.98 inches long; **flower tube** covered with broadly lanceolate, imbricate scales with protruding white pubescence; sepals linear, acuminate and **petals** white, narrow-spatulate; stamens nearly erect. Fruit a depressed, globose berry and ~ 2.36 inches in diameter; dull red at maturity

Similar Species: Fragrant prickly apple (*Harrisia fragrans*) occurs on FL's east coast (St. Lucie County) on shell mounds; spines 9-13 per cluster, 1-1.5 inches long; inner petals entire; fruits red when ripe. Aboriginal prickly pear (*H. aboriginum*) occurs on FL's southwest coast on shell mounds; spines 7-9 per cluster, up to 0.4 inches long; inner petals with teeth at the tip; fruits yellow to orange when ripe.

Related Rare Species: Fragrant prickly apple (*Harrisia fragrans*) occurs on FL's east coast (St. Lucie County) on shell mounds; spines 9-13 per cluster, 1-1.5 inches long;

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Habitat: Coastal berms, rockland hammocks, shell mounds, ruderal and on upland fringes of marine tidal swamps.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Endemic to peninsular FL.

Conservation Status: Threatened by horticultural collection, invasive plant species encroachment, sea-level rise, and habitat destruction (especially destruction of shell mounds for road fill material).

Protection and Management: Protect upland coastal habitats; monitor known populations; protect plants from off-road vehicles and plant poachers with fences; remove invasive plant species.

References: Kral 1983, Long and Lakela 1971, Weakley 2020, Wunderlin 1982, Wunderlin and Hansen 2011