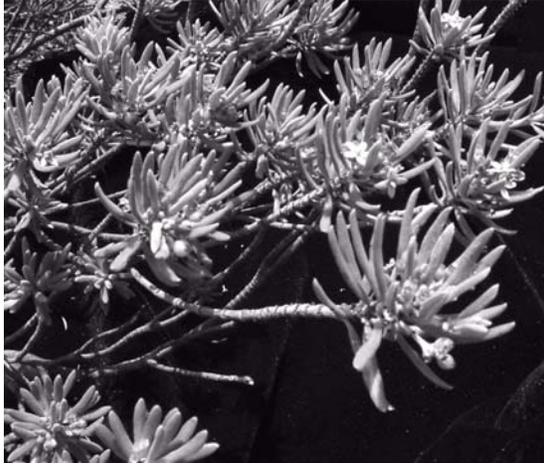


***Strumpfia maritima* Jacq.**
RUBIACEAE

pride-of-Big-Pine

Synonyms: none



General Description.—Pride-of-Big-Pine, also known as snowbank, rosemary, strumpfia, lirio, and rosarin-bord-de-mer, is an evergreen shrub usually 1 m or less in height but sometimes reaching 2 m. Most plants have a profusion of gray stems and branches. The twigs are slender (3 to 4 mm in diameter), and prominently ringed from persistent stipule bases. The whorled dark-green foliage is crowded at the ends of branches. Leaves are linear and leathery, 1 to 3 cm long with petioles about 1 mm long, with an entire and revolute margin. Inflorescences are axillary, few-flowered racemes. The individual flowers are white to pink, campanulate with a tube about 1 mm long and corolla 6 mm across with five lobes. The fruit, a white, fleshy globose drupe, is 3 to 6 mm in diameter with a persistent calyx. It contains one or two seeds (Howard 1989, Liogier 1997, Nelson 1996).

Range.—Pride-of-Big-Pine is native to the Florida Keys, the Bahamas, the Greater and Lesser Antilles, Grand Cayman, several islands north of Venezuela, and Yucatan, Mexico (Howard 1989, Liogier 1997, Nelson 1996). The species is listed as endangered in Florida (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 1997). It is not known to have naturalized outside its native range.

Ecology.—Pride-of-Big-Pine is confined to coastal areas. Types of habitat include rocky headlands, coastal cliffs, beach strands, and coastal

flats from near sea level to a few meters in elevation. It frequently grows in cracks in rocks or rocky rubble. The soils are salty, and the plant tolerates sea water overwash and heavy salt spray. Mean annual precipitation ranges from about 600 to 900 mm. Pride-of-Big-Pine grows singly, scattered, or in small thickets. When growing in severe habitats, it sometimes forms natural bonsais.

Reproduction.—Pride-of-Big-Pine blooms and fruits throughout the year (Nelson 1996). The flowers are probably pollinated by insects. The fresh fruits weigh about 0.02 g each. A collection of air-dried seeds ($n = 99$) from Puerto Rico averaged 0.0052 ± 0.0001 g/seed or 192,000 seeds/kg. The seeds were placed to germinate on the surface of moist peat, and 6 percent germinated between 4 and 6 months after sowing. Germination is epigeous. Plants coppice when broken or cut (author's observation). The seeds are probably dispersed by birds.

Growth and Management.—Pride-of-Big-Pine grows slowly. Planting experience for this species has not been published. Because it is rare or uncommon and never aggressive, control is not necessary. Probably the best management is to totally protect existing stands and suitable habitat from disturbance.

Benefits.—Pride-of-Big-Pine helps protect the soil in coastal sites and provides cover for wildlife. The Exuma Island iguana (*Cyclura cychlura figginsii*), an endangered species from the Bahamas, feeds on fruits, flowers, buds, and leaves of Pride-of-Big-Pine (Knapp 2002). Probably many other species eat the fruits. It is a pretty plant and adds to the aesthetics of coastlines. If propagation and cultural techniques can be worked out, it would make a valuable ornamental. Infusions of the leaves are reported to be a stimulant useful in treating poisonous bites, fever, and stupor and weakness caused by fever (Liogier 1990).

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