

# Bushy St. John's-wort



*Hypericum densiflorum* flowers



Photo credits: *Stephen M. Young*

**Scientific Name** *Hypericum densiflorum*  
Pursh

**Family Name** Clusiaceae  
st. john's-wort family

## Did you know?

This species was introduced into the horticulture trade in the US in 1899 (Dirr 1975) but was found in Long Island pine barrens as far back as 1884. Even though the only remaining population occurs in a natural area near large houses where it could have escaped from garden plantings, it could also be a relic from native populations.

## Summary

**Protection** Endangered in New York State, not listed federally.

This level of state protection means: listed species are those with: 1) 5 or fewer extant sites, or 2) fewer than 1,000 individuals, or 3) restricted to fewer than 4 U.S.G.S. 7 ½ minute topographical maps, or 4) species listed as endangered by U.S. Department of Interior.

**Rarity** G5, S1

A global rarity rank of G5 means: This species is demonstrably secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.

A state rarity rank of S1 means: This plant is endangered/critically imperiled in New York because of extreme rarity (typically 5 or fewer populations or very few remaining individuals) or is extremely vulnerable to extirpation from New York due to biological factors.

## Conservation Status in New York

There is one small existing population that is currently threatened by Phragmites. Two records from the turn of the 20th century from Western Long Island are now considered gone because their habitat has been destroyed but there's still a chance that one population that was documented in 1916 in Babylon may still be present.

## Short-term Trends

Plant numbers have ranged from six to 300 depending upon water levels so it is difficult to tell what the actual short-term trend is.

## Long-term Trends

Long-term trends are negative as known populations have been reduced from three to one.

# Conservation and Management

## Threats

Phragmites is crowding out and shading the plants.

## Conservation Strategies and Management Practices

The pondshore needs to be protected from direct disturbance by ATVs and excessive trampling. Phragmites must be prevented from expanding and the current population must be eliminated. A natural buffer of at least 200 feet should be established around the ponds to prevent excessive runoff and pollution events.

## Research Needs

Research is needed into methods to successfully propagate this plant so the population can be augmented at its present site.

## Habitat

The plants occur in a red maple swamp that has colonized the remains of an old pond after the dam broke (New York Natural Heritage Program 2012). Wet meadows and moist bottomlands, less often on rocky slopes (Gleason and Cronquist 1991). Swamps and wet acid soil (Fernald 1950).

## Associated Ecological Communities

### Red Maple-hardwood Swamp

A hardwood swamp that occurs in poorly drained depressions, usually on inorganic soils. Red maple is usually the most abundant canopy tree, but it can also be codominant with white, green, or black ash; white or slippery elm; yellow birch; and swamp white oak.

## Associated Species

Shallow Sedge (*Carex lurida*)  
Tussock Sedge (*Carex stricta*)  
Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

## Identification Comments

This plant is a much-branched shrub about 2-3 meters tall. Leaves are narrow and usually wider towards the tip, 2-4 centimeters long and 5-8 millimeters wide. There are 7-many flowers in a large inflorescence that appears leafy. Each flower has 3 styles and five bright yellow petals around many long yellow stamens. The fruit is a capsule up to 6 millimeters

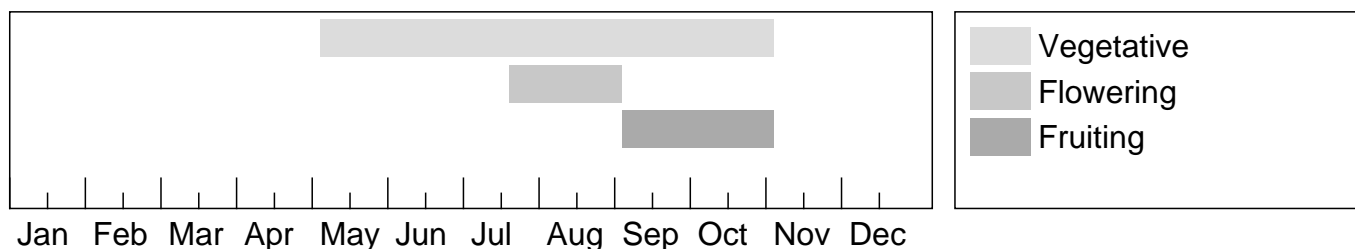
long and 3 millimeters wide. The placentas intrude into the fruit but do not meet in the center.

### Best Life Stage for Identifying This Species

The best time to identify this shrub is when it is in flower or fruit.

### The Best Time to See

The leaves come out in April or May and it flowers in late July through August. The fruits are visible in September and October.



The time of year you would expect to find Bushy St. John's-wort in New York.

### Similar Species

Shrubby St. John's-wort, *Hypericum prolificum*, can look similar but there are only 3-7 flowers in its inflorescence and the fruit is larger, 7 mm long by 3.5 mm wide.

## Taxonomy

Kingdom Plantae

└ Phylum Anthophyta

└ Class Dicots (Dicotyledoneae)

└ Order Theales

└ Family Clusiaceae (st. john's-wort family)

## Additional Resources

### Links

#### USDA Plants Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/nameSearch?mode=sciname&keywordquery=HYPERICUM+DENSIFLORUM>

#### NatureServe Explorer

<http://natureserve.org/explorer/servlet/NatureServe?searchName=HYPERICUM+DENSIFLORUM>

#### Google Images

<http://images.google.com/images?q=HYPERICUM+DENSIFLORUM>

## Best Identification Reference

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