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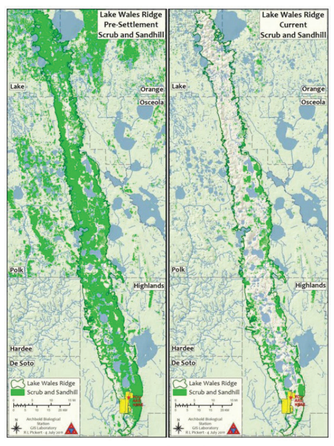
Resurrecting the Past: Germinating Historic Herbarium Seeds to Study Evolution in a Florida Scrub Endemic

By using both natural history collections and contemporary sampling, we can begin to understand how Florida scrub has changed in response to anthropogenic change.

Florida scrub, an endangered Florida desert



This ecosystem supports the aquifers where 90% of Floridians get their drinking water



Swain et al., 2012

Understanding Pinweed species diversity



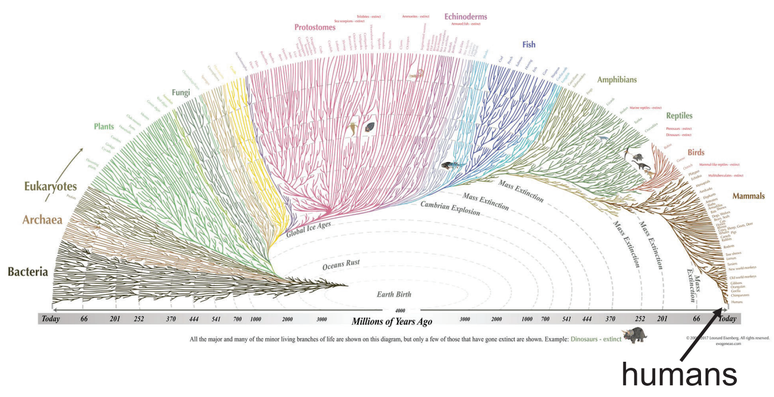
Lechea divaricata
© Scott Ward



Lechea cernua

18 - 21 species in the genus

Studying the evolution of Pinweeds using trees

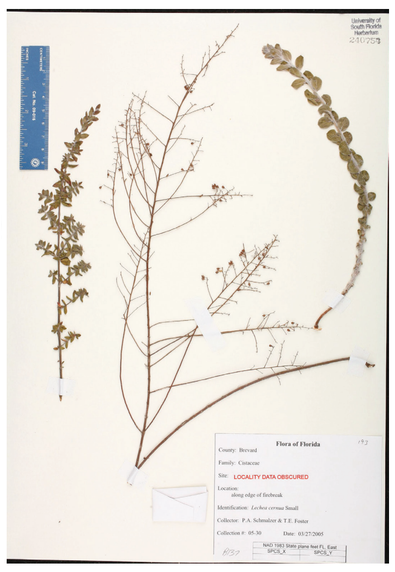


humans

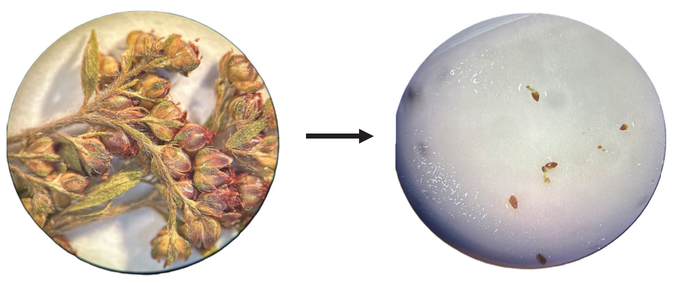
Utilizing natural history collections

I collect leaves and seeds!



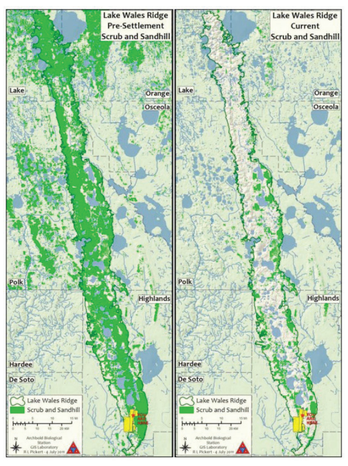


Germinating 90-year-old seeds



A rare opportunity to sample the genetics of the past

How has Florida scrub fared?



Swain et al., 2012

Now we can compare the genetics of historic and contemporary populations!

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