

2014 February *Guess that Plant*



Turkey Beard, *Xerophyllum asphodeloides* (L.) Nuttall

The February *Guess That Plant* was the Pine Barren lily, turkey beard, *Xerophyllum*. Turkey beard's name is well deserved. The long, narrow blades are tough as nails and were once a staple for early native American basketry. The plant is best known for its showy flower stalk. Those that know the turkey beards Pine Barren haunt know you may not see the flower, deer like it too! Amny times you are limited only to the tough, basal leaves to make the identification. Turkey beard prefers the sandy gardients found in pitch pine lowlands. This habitat is best suited for turkey beard with frequent fires, selecting for fire tolerant plants like turkey beard. The plant is however also known for the edges of red maple swamps on the western Pinelands periphery. At the intersection of the Kirkwood and cretaceous sediments, turkey beard may be found under American beech, sweet gum and red maple.

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