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DPNR Urging Community to Help Protect and Conserve Endangered Egger’s Century Plant (Agave Eggersiana)

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Conserve Egger’s Century Plant (Agave Eggersiana) By. GETTY IMAGES

The V.I. Department of Planning and Natural resources is reminding the public to help protect and conserve the endangered Egger’s Century Plant (*Agave eggersiana*). “Popularly known as our traditional Virgin Islands Christmas tree, this century plant, along with all of our native endangered species, is a resource we want to be able to protect for our future generations,” said D.P.N.R. Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol.

D.P.N.R. said *Agave eggersiana* is a common ornamental plant and is a native, endemic species on St. Croix. It has a rosette body of thick, fleshy leaves that end in a sharp point and with a spiny

margin. These plants reproduce only once every 10 to 15 years by producing a tall stalk that can reach up to 20 feet high. The stalk produces bright yellow flowers which are a favorite of bees and other pollinators. These plants do not produce fruits or seeds, but instead, the stalk produces bulbils which then fall to the ground to replace the mother plant that then dies.

According to the release, one of the greatest threats to this endangered species is that people unknowingly cut the flowering stalk which kills the plant before it has a chance to reproduce. Many *Agave eggersiana* are now beginning to produce stalks throughout January to March and it is important for the public to help protect these endangered species by not damaging or cutting flowering stalks.

To report any damaged or cut *Agave eggersiana* plants, feel free to use the DPNR Tip411 app for smartphones or use the website (<https://dpr.vi.gov/home/dpr-hotline/>) or call the Division of Fish and Wildlife on St. Croix at 340-773-1082 (x2203).

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