Available from https://tipas.kew.org/site/sabbath-hill/
[Accessed 16 June 2026]

Sabbath Hill

BVITIPA017

Country: **British Virgin Islands**
Administrative region: **Tortola (Province)**
Central co-ordinates: **18.43034 N, -64.58813 E**
Area: **0.66km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

A(i), A(iii), B(ii), C(iii)

IPA assessment rationale

The area qualified as a TIPA for its importance for globally threatened and national high conservation importance species, botanical richness and nationally threatened Semi-deciduous gallery forest habitat.

Site description

This TIPA on Tortola's eastern side is uninhabited and includes the eastern slopes of Sabbath Hill from Upper Hope towards Kingston Hill. The elevation drops from 241m to 80m as the hills slope down towards Spring Ghut and Brown Ghut which in turn run towards Paraquita Bay.

Botanical significance

At the southern end of this TIPA in the Seasonally deciduous forests and woodlands one can find globally threatened species and national high conservation importance species. Two Puerto Rican Bank endemics qualified the TIPA under sub-criterion A(i), Bastardiopsis eggersii (EN) and Agave missionum (VU). The site is one of the five best nationally for each of these species. Despite no high accuracy records for Agave missionum within the TIPA, it has been agreed by the BVI TIPAs National Team during the TIPAs assessment workshop that the species is widespread on Tortola and should be noted. The naturally occurring aroid Anthurium x selloum qualified under TIPAs sub-criterion A(iii), as it is only found in a few locations on Tortola and on St. John in the USVI. There is a population of Tolumnia prionochila (NT) and records for Rondeletia pilosa (NT). The Virgin Islands endemic Reynosia guama (NT) is also present within the TIPA. A large population (c.40-50 plants) of the rare Virgin Islands endemic Solanum conocarpum Dunal was discovered within this TIPA by Kew and NPTVI researchers during two field trips to the area in June and November 2018. This plant was only known from St John in the USVI until this recent discovery. The species hasn't been considered for TIPAs criteria as the records were post TIPAs workshop and its IUCN assessment is pending.

Habitat and geology

The northern part of the TIPA, near Lower Hope, Upper Hope and Spring Ghut have large areas of the nationally threatened Semi-deciduous gallery forest habitat, being identified as the best site for this habitat in the BVI under sub-criterion C(iii). More than half of BVI's Semi-deciduous gallery forests are found on Tortola and most of them are on the eastern side of the island.

Conservation issues

The main threats to the TIPA include urban development, deforestation, grazing by feral animals, extraction, clearance for farming (including illegal crops) and invasive species.

Site assessor(s)

BVI TIPAs National Team, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew - National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands - BVI Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour and Immigration

IPA criterion A species

SPECIES	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 1% OF GLOBAL POPULATION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL POPULATION	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	ENTIRE GLOBAL POPULATION	SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT	ABUNDANCE AT SITE
Agave missionum Trel.	A(i)	–	–	✓	–	–	
Bastardiopsis eggersii (Baker f.) Fuertes & Fryxell	A(i)	–	–	✓	–	–	
Anthurium × selloanum K.Koch	A(iii)	–	✓	–	–	–	

IPA criterion C qualifying habitats

HABITAT	QUALIFYING SUB-CRITERION	≥ 5% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	≥ 10% OF NATIONAL RESOURCE	1 OF 5 BEST SITES NATIONALLY	AREAL COVERAGE AT SITE
Semi-deciduous Gallery Forest	C(iii)	–	–	✓	

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE

Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE

Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING

Bibliography

The BVI TIPAs National Team 2019. **Identifying and Conserving Tropical Important Plant Areas in the British Virgin Islands (2016-2019): Final Technical Report.**