

Mount Sage

BVITIPA011



Country: **British Virgin Islands**

Administrative region: **Tortola (Province)**

Central co-ordinates: **18.40568 N, -64.65948 E**

Area: **2.99km²**

Qualifying IPA criteria

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

IPA assessment rationale

This area qualified as a TIPA for being one of only two locations where the Upland evergreen forest habitat occurs in the BVI and for the presence of many rare regional endemic species and globally threatened species.

Site description

The TIPA covers higher elevations of Mount Sage, 222 m and above, cutting across the mountain to exclude the Edney settlement. It includes all of Sage Mountain National Park, which is the only Forestry Reserve in the BVI (declared in 1954), and the first BVI National Park (declared in 1964), designated to protect rare and threatened plant species, small tracts of primary forest, watersheds and biodiversity.

Botanical significance

The area is botanically rich. Several globally threatened and species of national high conservation importance have been recorded growing along Mount Sage's ridge and at higher elevations within the TIPA. This includes the whole national populations of the Puerto Rican Bank endemics *Ilex urbaniana* (VU) and *Miconia thomasiana* (NT). Species that in the BVI are only known from Tortola and with important populations growing in this TIPA are the threatened CITES listed economic species *Cedrela odorata* (VU), the Virgin Islands

endemic *Pilea sanctae-crucis* (EN) and the naturally occurring Virgin Islands endemic aroid *Anthurium x selloum*. The only record in the BVI for the Greater Antilles threatened *Picrasma excelsa* (VU) is a single historical herbarium specimen from 1954 for this area on Tortola, but this species hasn't been found in modern surveys. Two rare tree species which only grow in the Upland evergreen forest habitat on Tortola and Virgin Gorda are the Virgin Islands endemic *Calyptanthes thomasiana* (EN) and the Puerto Rican Bank endemic *Calyptanthes kiaerskovii* (CR), both highly threatened because of their restricted distribution and small number of individuals. Despite trees being observed in flower and fruit, insect pests are a current threat.

Habitat and geology

The nationally threatened Upland evergreen forest habitat covers almost all this TIPA, transitioning to Seasonally deciduous forests and woodlands at its southern and eastern boundaries. This upland habitat is rare in the BVI, occurring at higher elevations (about 100-500m) where there is enough moisture. It is present on only two islands, Tortola having 95.83% of the national resource for this habitat and Virgin Gorda only 4.17%. The site qualified under sub-criterion C(iii) for its importance for the conservation of this nationally threatened habitat. Anthropogenic habitat is present in only 1% of this TIPA.

Conservation issues

Threats include invasive plants and pests, grazing by feral animals and illegal farming. Many trees were lost in 2017 during and after Hurricane Irma because of the area's elevation and exposure. The increase in intensity of hurricanes predicted for the region poses a threat to the habitats and threatened species within the TIPA.

Site assessor(s)

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
<i>Calyptanthes kiaerskovii</i> Krug & Urb.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Calyptanthes thomasiana</i> O.Berg	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Cedrela odorata</i> L.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Ilex urbaniana</i> Loes.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Picrasma excelsa</i> (Sw.) Planch.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Pilea sanctae-crucis</i> Liebm.	A(i)	—	✓	—	—	—	
<i>Anthurium × selloanum</i> 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
Upland Evergreen Forest	C(iii)	—	—		

General site habitats

GENERAL SITE HABITAT	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
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Land use types

LAND USE TYPE	PERCENT COVERAGE	IMPORTANCE
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Threats

THREAT	SEVERITY	TIMING
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