

GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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**DPNR URGES PUBLIC TO PROTECT AND CONSERVE
EGGER'S CENTURY PLANT (*Agave eggersiana*)**

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural resources reminds 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," Commissioner Oriol 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.

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 please feel free to use the DPNR Tip411app 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).