

The Weekly Plant Extra 9 March 2014

Common names: shindagger, Schott's agave

Scientific name: *Agave schottii*¹

Discussion:

I spotted this plant on a hike along the Arizona Trail, from Pistil Hill Road to Colossal Cave Park. It was spectacular, but there was only one in bloom, up the hill above the trail. This section of the Arizona Trail starts at about the elevation of Academy Village but then climbs upward. It is after you start this climb that shindagger starts to cover the hillsides. The books list it as growing from 3500-7000 ft. elevation. As far as I know, this plant is not found in Academy Village, so it's a Weekly Plant "extra".

Shindagger is so named because the leaves are sharply tipped, slightly curved, and only about 16" high, just the right height and shape to poke you in the shins. This plant will remind you of a yucca, because the leaves aren't tooth. Instead they have fine curved fiber along the edges. This agave forms large mats that help hold the soil and control erosion.

The flower stalk reaches high above the leaves to 8-9'. The stalk is unbranched with all the flowers held close to the stalk. It is listed as flowering in May, so maybe there will be more flowers to come. After flowering, the rosette dies but the other rosettes in the clump continue on.

If you want to go searching for this plant, head out from the Pistil Hill trailhead. There are many, many plants on both sides of the trail, probably for a half mile or so, about 1.5-2 miles from the trailhead, after the trail starts to climb. The flowering plant is to the right above eye level.

¹ Tropicos is the source of the currently accepted scientific name: <http://www.tropicos.org/>.



Flowering stalk of shindagger and, below, the dying rosette from which it arose.



*Above: A clump of *Agave schottii*.*

Right: A close-up of the leaves showing the stringy fibers (arrow) on the edge of the leaves.



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