

Tillandsia 'Len Summers'

By Dr Dale Dixon and Chris Larson

Ascertaining the correct identity of this plant is certainly not a straight forward case. Given that this plant was quite an early introduction to Australia and at a time when hybrid plants in collections were fewer, it is quite possible that this plant originated from habitat. However, without essential provenance data it would be erroneous to continue to link Len Summers' plant to *Tillandsia pruinosa*. Through correspondence with Pam Koide in the US we were also unable to make a direct connection to the collector Califano that the natural hybrid *Tillandsia xcalifano* is named after. The data supplied in Table 1 below clearly shows that there are more differences (red highlights) than similarities (green highlights), in both vegetative and reproductive characters, between *Tillandsia pruinosa* and *Tillandsia* 'Len's Pruinosa'. At this time we will never know more about Len's plant as we do today unless a wild collected plant with *bona fide* collection data comes to light or a similar plant is collected from habitat. This plant appears to be similar to *Tillandsia pruinosa* but has a substantial number of differences to that species, it is now registered as *Tillandsia Len Summers*.

This plant may be in collections as: *Tillandsia pruinosa* Califano (1970s to 2019) and more recently *Tillandsia* 'Len's Pruinosa' sold through *Tillandsia Addicts* (2019-present).

Character	Dale's pruinosa	Len's pruinosa	Gouda Pruinosa description
Habit	Acaulescent	Acaulescent	Acaulescent
Pseudobulb	Very obvious	Not very obvious	Pseudobulb present
Height (flowering plant)	9-15cm	8.5cm	8-23cm
No. crown leaves	12-17	23	10-20
Leaf sheath	Inflated	Not inflated	Inflated
Leaf blade/base junction	Abruptly contracted	Tapering	Abruptly contracted
Leaf base margin	Purple	White	Purple-red
Indumentum (scales)	White	White	White
Flowering leaf colour	Brownish-maroon	Brownish	?
Leaves	Secund-flexuous	Sub-secund	Secund-flexuous
Inflorescence position	Exserted and obvious	Concealed	Exserted and obvious
Inflorescence bracts	Distichous	Polystichous	Not mentioned
Inflorescence bract colour	Bright pink	Dull pink-green	Not mentioned
Sepals	Coriaceous	Coriaceous	Coriaceous
Sepal indumentum	Subglabrous	Present	Sparsely lepidote to subglabrous
Sepal colour	Tinged rose pink at apex	Tinged pink	Tinged rose pink
Sepals length	1/2 size of petals	1/2 size of petals	Sepal 1.3-1.9cm/petal 3cm