

RAFFLESACEAE RAFFLESIA FAMILY

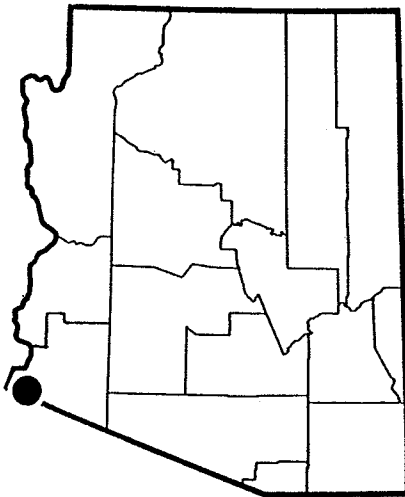
George Yatskievych
 Missouri Botanical Garden
 P. O. Box 299
 St. Louis, MO 63166

Monoecious or dioecious stem or root parasites, lacking chlorophyll. STEMS not apparent and entirely inside host plants (in ours) or reduced and fleshy. LEAVES highly reduced, scale-like. INFLORESCENCES short spikes or the flowers solitary. FLOWERS generally imperfect, actinomorphic; sepals 4-16, often fused at base; petals none; stamens 5-many, fused to axis of style, forming a column; pistil of 1-several locules (= carpels?); column expanded at tip into a disk with stigmatic areas along or under margin; ovary more or less inferior; placentation parietal. FRUITS various, generally fleshy. SEEDS numerous, minute. --7-8 genera; 30-50 spp; worldwide, especially in tropical areas. Taxonomically the family is poorly known. Species of *Rafflesia* have world's largest flowers.

Pilostyles Guill.

Stem parasites. STEMS not apparent, reduced to a network within the host tissues. LEAVES reduced to small bracts subtending flowers. FLOWERS imperfect, minute; sepals 4-5; anthers of staminate flowers sessile on column under margin of disk; ovary of pistillate flower inferior, locule 1; stigmas in ring along disk-like margin of expanded column. FRUITS fleshy capsules. Ca. 20 spp.; tropical Amer., Afr., sw Asia (esp. Iran), and Australia. (Latin: *pilos* = hair + *stylos* = pillar or stylus). Only the flowers and bracts are visible on the surface of the host stems. It is not known whether plants of this genus are monoecious or dioecious.

Pilostyles thurberi A. Gray (for George Thurber). --FLOWERS less than 2 mm long, brown or maroon. BRACTS 4-7, 1-1.5 mm long, overlapping, circular to ovate. FLOWERS with sepals similar to bracts; disk at apex of styler column ca. 1 mm in diameter; stamens in a ring of ca. 3 rows. --Uncommon in open desert-scrub; sw AZ: Yuma Co.; 300-450 ft; Apr.-May. se CA, NM, s NV, TX; Mex. Parasitic on species of *Dalea*, *Psoralea*, and undoubtedly on other Leguminosae. Arizona collections of this odd plant have been recorded on *Psoralea emoryi*.



Rafflesiaceae Figure 1. Distribution of *Pilostyles thurberi* in Arizona.