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## U.S. Government Sued Over Plants

Sep 12, 2004 (WENN via COMTEX) — The US government is set to battle a lawsuit from an environmental group after they failed to place two plant species in the Virgin Islands under federal protection.

The Tucson, Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity filed suit earlier this month (ends03SEP04) claimed the US Fish and Wildlife Service violated the law by taking more than eight years to decide whether the plants should be federally protected.

Fewer than 50 specimens of *Agave eggersiana*, an aloelike plant that grows up to 25 feet (eight metres) tall and has small pink flowers, are left in the US Virgin Island of St Croix.

The Center's spokesman Peter Galvin says less than 200 specimens of *Solanum conocarpum*, a bushy plant with small purple and yellow flowers, remain on the island. The US Virgin Islands National Park in St John asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to place both plants on the endangered species list in 1996. (ES/WNWCENN/CM)