

What is a Florida native wildflower?

The Florida Wildflower Foundation defines “Florida native wildflower” as any flowering herbaceous species that grew wild within the state’s natural ecosystems in the 1560s when Florida’s first botanical records were created. The Foundation is also an advocate for flowering native shrubs, vines, trees, grasses and grass-like plants.

It also recognizes as a “Florida native wildflower”:

- Species that may have been introduced prior to the 1560s by Native Americans through trade and travel.
- Species introduced to Florida without the aid of human intervention (for example, via tropical storms, floods, animals, insects, etc.), regardless of when these species were first officially documented.
- Any cultivated selection or horticultural variety that: 1) meets the criteria described in this document, 2) was collected in a natural Florida ecosystem, *and* 2) was not intentionally manipulated to alter any characteristic.

However, in considering a plant’s nativity to Florida, the Foundation allows ample room for the vast gray area that lies between what is believed to be botanically and historically correct and what we do not – and may never – know. Hence, while the Foundation uses the “Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida,” Second Edition (2003, R.P. Wunderlin and B.F. Hansen; University Press of Florida, Gainesville) as a guide regarding a species’ native status, it does not automatically exclude wildflowers as being native to Florida simply because they lie within this gray area.

Furthermore, the Foundation fully recognizes that change is inevitable. We may be positive of a plant’s native or non-native status until modern-day research brings forth new facts. For this reason, the Foundation welcomes open discussion based on substantiated scientific or historic evidence.

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- Nancy Bissett
- Dr. David Hall
- Brightman Logan
- Dr. Jeff Norcini
- Dr. Walter K. Taylor