Florida’s state wildflower

Florida’s state wildflower is Coreopsis, commonly called Tickseed. Most of the 17 species that occur here are native to Florida. All 17 occur in South Florida, with Leavenworth’s Tickseed (Coreopsis leavenworthii) being most common.

Tickseeds commonly seen on roadsides are Leavenworth’s, Swamp (C. nudata), Florida (C. floridana) and Coastalplain (C. gladiata), all of which occur in moist areas. Also common are Lanceleaf Tickseed (C. lanceolata) and Goldenmane Tickseed (C. basalis), which occur in drier sites.

Peak flowering time varies from spring to fall, depending on the species. However, Tickseeds that occur widely, such as Leavenworth’s, tend to flower earlier in the south. Roadside conditions and vegetation management practices may cause Tickseed appearance to vary considerably and can reduce or extend flowering seasons.

All Tickseeds in Florida have daisy-like flowers with yellow petals, except Swamp Tickseed, which has pinkish purple petals. Petals, which actually are individual ray flowers, surround seed-producing disk flowers in the center. Each small, ovalish seed has two short spines at one end, which give the seed a tick-like appearance.

Viva La Florida!

In March 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon arrived in the land he would name La Florida, “land of flowers,” in honor of Spain’s Easter season, Pascua Florida. The abundant spring wildflowers he would have seen could have influenced the name choice.

Florida has the nation’s third-largest diversity of wildflowers, from the state wildflower, Coreopsis, to beauties that include Blanketflower (Gaillardia pulchella), Beach Sunflower (Helianthus debilis), Standing Cypress (Ipomopsis rubra) and Blackeyed Susan (Rudbeckia hirta). Many can be seen along roadsides that are managed for wildflowers or infrequently mowed.

Learn more about the state’s roadside wildflower program at www.fdot.gov/designsupport/wildflowers/default.shtm.

Why wildflowers?

Florida’s native wildflowers nourish pollinators that put food on our tables. They also conserve water in landscapes, protect water and air quality, supply wildlife habitat, beautify communities, and help maintain a healthy environment for all.

Pick a State Wildflower!

The State Wildflower license plate is Florida’s only dedicated funding source for native wildflower planting, education and research projects. Get your plate today at your county tag office.

Get involved

For more information on Florida’s native wildflowers and the work of the Florida Wildflower Foundation, visit www.FlaWildflowers.org. You can support Florida’s wildflowers by becoming a Florida Wildflower Foundation member. Visit www.FlaWildflowers.org/support.

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Coreopsis auriculata
Lobed Tickseed
Flowering: Spring
Height: ½ to 1 ft
Habitat: Woodland edges; sandy, dry, pine forests
Roadside frequency: Rare; Escambia County only
Notes: Recently only observed in Florida. Native to the U.S. but may not be native to Florida.

Coreopsis gladiata
Largeflower Tickseed
Flowering: Spring, summer
Height: 1½ to 2 ft
Habitat: Disturbed sites
Roadside frequency: Rare
Note: Many popular garden plants are derived from this species.

Coreopsis floridana
Florida Tickseed
Flowering: Very late summer to very early fall
Height: 2 to 5 ft
Habitat: Moist areas — ditches, pine flatwoods, prairies, edges of cypress swamps
Roadside frequency: Occasional
Notes: Resembles C. leavenworthii but peak flowering of C. floridana is much later in the season. Tiny black dots can be seen on leaves when leaves are backlit and viewed close up. Thought to be one of the parent plants of C. floridana.

Coreopsis leavenworthii
Leavenworth’s Tickseed
Flowering: Spring, summer
Height: 1 to 2 ft
Habitat: Disturbed sandy sites
Roadside frequency: Rare
Note: Of the 16 Coreopsis species in Florida with compound leaves composed of 3 lance-shaped leaflets, with these leaves most often occurring in the middle part of the plant.

Coreopsis pinetorum
Texas Tickseed
Flowering: Fall
Height: 2 to 4 ft
Habitat: Moist areas — ditches, pine flatwoods, prairies, edges of cypress swamps
Roadside frequency: Occasional
Notes: Resembles C. leavenworthii but peak flowering of C. pinetorum is much later in the season. Tiny black dots can be seen on leaves when leaves are backlit and viewed close up. Thought to be one of the parent plants of C. floridana.

Coreopsis nudata
Swamp Tickseed
Flowering: Spring
Height: 2 to 5 ft
Habitat: Moist areas — ditches, pine flatwoods, prairies, marshes and swamps
Roadside frequency: Occasional; locally abundant
Note: Of the 16 Coreopsis species observed in Florida, only 5 are downy; the common name refers to the star-like arrangement of the green bracts underneath the petals.

Coreopsis tinctoria
Golden Tickseed
Flowering: Summer
Height: 1 to 4 ft
Habitat: Moist sites — ditches and disturbed sites
Roadside frequency: Rare, except locally abundant where planted
Notes: Native to the U.S. but probably not native to modern-day Florida. Will probably hybridize with C. leavenworthii when both species are in close proximity; hybrid will have small dark-red spot at base of petal.

Coreopsis leucotricha
Helianthus-Leaf Swamp Tickseed
Found only in Duval County. Last observed in 1898.

Coreopsis bakeri
Baker’s tickseed
Discovered in 2015. To learn more, visit FlaWildflowers.org/welcome-bakers-tickseed.

Coreopsis auriculata
Lobed Tickseed
Flowering: Spring
Height: ½ to 1 ft
Habitat: Woodland edges; sandy, dry, pine forests
Roadside frequency: Rare; Escambia County only
Notes: Recently only observed in Florida. Native to the U.S. but may not be native to Florida.

Coreopsis gladiata
Largeflower Tickseed
Flowering: Spring, summer
Height: 1½ to 2 ft
Habitat: Disturbed sites
Roadside frequency: Rare
Note: Many popular garden plants are derived from this species.

Coreopsis floridana
Florida Tickseed
Flowering: Very late summer to very early fall
Height: 2 to 5 ft
Habitat: Moist areas — ditches, pine flatwoods, prairies, edges of cypress swamps
Roadside frequency: Occasional
Notes: Resembles C. leavenworthii but peak flowering of C. floridana is much later in the season. Tiny black dots can be seen on leaves when leaves are backlit and viewed close up. Thought to be one of the parent plants of C. floridana.

Coreopsis tripteris
Tall Tickseed
Flowering: Summer
Height: 2 to 4 ft
Habitat: Moist — hardwood or hardwood/pine forests
Roadside frequency: Rare
Note: Only Coreopsis species in Florida with compound leaves composed of 3 lance-shaped leaflets, with these leaves most often occurring in the middle part of the plant.