

planting and care of *Coreopsis* in landscapes



FLORIDA
WILDFLOWER
FOUNDATION

Photo by Stacey Matrazzo

About this genus



Photo by Vince Lamb

Coreopsis leavenworthii

Florida's state wildflower is *Coreopsis*, also known as Tickseed, and refers to all 11 species native to Florida. Many of these occur only in North Florida and the Panhandle. The most common species, *Coreopsis leavenworthii*, is almost entirely endemic to Florida, which means it occurs naturally nowhere else in the world. Commonly known as Leavenworth's *Coreopsis*, or Common Tickseed, this plant can be found throughout Florida, especially on roadsides and in disturbed areas, flatwoods and prairies.

Description

Coreopsis is an annual but can be a short-lived perennial in the southern half of Florida. It blooms with bouquets of yellow daisy-like flowers throughout the year — especially in spring — when the weather is warm. The 1- to 2-inch flowers have dark centers surrounded by scalloped yellow ray florets, which look like petals, but technically are not. *Coreopsis* grows 1½ to 3 feet tall on slender stems with many branches. Its bright green leaves are narrow and range from simple to lobed or deeply divided, thus giving the plant a more open appearance.

Planting

As an annual or short-lived perennial, *Coreopsis* needs a site that offers space for it to reseed. It can reseed between other plants, such as other wildflowers, if they are not too competitive.

Coreopsis is a great nectar plant for butterflies and pollinators.

It also has been used to make tea and for treating various medical ailments.



Photo by Alan Shapiro

Coreopsis lanceolata



Photo by Jeff Norcini

Coreopsis lanceolata "meadow"



The State Wildflower license plate supports Florida native wildflower planting, education and research. Get the plate and help fill our state with wildflowers!



Seeds

Seeds are commercially available, or you can harvest your own. They mature very quickly after flower petals have withered. Look for mature seeds with “wings” on their sides in the little cup at the tip of the stem. Germination usually occurs in less than seven days. The first leaves of a seedling are not lobed and have rounded tips.



Coreopsis leavenworthii seedlings at 24 days

Site Conditions

Coreopsis likes any open, moist site, preferably sandy and drained, but is not very particular about soil acidity. Full sun produces the most flowers. Though it can tolerate some drought and drier soils, it will not perform as well. Moist soils also allow for reseeding — important in maintaining this species.

Plants

Coreopsis is available in quarts and gallons. They may be planted anytime of the year; plant in the spring for the full benefit of flowering. Space 1 to 2 feet apart. *Coreopsis* establishes quickly in moist soils.



Coreopsis lanceolata seedlings at 22 days

Care

Because this plant is an annual, especially in colder areas, cold protection is not needed. *Coreopsis* is relatively disease and pest free, though some critters may feed on it.

If the plants are cut back near the end of their bloom, they will produce another flush of flowers. Plants can be string-trimmed or mowed at a 6- to 8-inch height.

Other species

Lanceleaf *Coreopsis* (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) grows naturally in North Florida and the Panhandle in sandhills and disturbed areas and is widely used farther south with good success. It is a short-lived perennial that readily reseeds. Its yellow ray flowers are complemented by a golden disk atop fairly thick stems. This spring bloomer can flower into summer with dead-heading and is drought tolerant.

Florida *Coreopsis* (*Coreopsis floridana*) is endemic to Florida and grows in wet prairies and wet pine flatwoods throughout the state. This perennial has thick fleshy leaves and larger flowers than Leavenworth's *Coreopsis*. It blooms in the fall on stems up to 3 feet tall. Yellow ray flowers surround a deep brown disk.



For *Coreopsis leavenworthii*, which occurs throughout Florida, the origin of the plants or seed does not seem to be a factor in successful growth, according to recent research. If other species of *Coreopsis* are being considered, look for local sources, as most other species occur far outside of Florida. Some, such as Lanceleaf *Coreopsis*, also have popular horticultural varieties developed from progeny outside Florida.

CAUTION