

Yellow colicroot

(*Aletris lutea*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Yellow colicroot is a slender, short-lived perennial that produces long terminal spikes of yellow blooms. Flowers have six fused tepals with bumpy outer surfaces. The flower stalk rises from the center of a basal rosette. Stem leaves are reduced or absent. Basal leaves are yellow-green with pointed tips. Seeds are born in three-parted capsules.

Of the five species of *Aletris* native to Florida, yellow colicroot is the most common and widely distributed (see native range below). It occurs naturally in mesic pine flatwoods, wet prairies, open seepage areas and moist ruderal sites. It flowers in late winter/early spring through summer.

Plants in the *Aletris* genus were previously classified in the Liliaceae family.

Family: Nartheciaceae (Bog asphodel family)

Native range: Nearly throughout except Broward and St. Lucie counties and the Keys in South Florida; Citrus County north to Suwannee and west to Jefferson County in North Florida; and Franklin and Gadsden counties in the Panhandle.

To see where natural populations of Yellow colicroot have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8a–10b

Soil: Moist, acidic sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 3'+tall

Propagation: Seeds, division

Garden tips: Yellow colicroot is not suitable for all landscapes as it requires regular moisture. It is tall and thin and is best planted in groups of three to five or more plants and behind shorter plants where it will be visible. Because it is deciduous, it should be planted with other tall species that flower in the fall to provide color and habitat in its absence. It is not salt tolerant.

Yellow colicroot is occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Growers may post availability on www.PlantRealFlorida.org.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich