

Pinewoods milkweed

(*Asclepias humistrata*)

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

Also known as sandhill or purple milkweed, pinewoods milkweed is a robust perennial, with large, thick leaves and a somewhat sprawling growth habit.

Its distinct flowers are pinkish-white to pale purple and are born in terminal umbels. Each flower bears a five-lobed calyx and five-lobed corolla. The lobes are reflexed. Leaves are dull grayish-green with conspicuous pink to lavender veins. They can grow up to 6" long and 3-4" wide, are sessile and clasping. Leaf arrangement is opposite. Its many stems may be prostrate or ascending and grow in various directions. Seeds are born in follicles and



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Pinewoods milkweed occurs naturally in sandhills, scrub and dry, ruderal areas. It blooms in spring and summer and is a larval host plant of monarch and queen butterflies.

Family: Apocynaceae (Dogbane family)

Native range: Panhandle, north and central peninsula

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

Hardiness: Zones 8a–9b

Soil: Deep, well-drained sandy soil

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 1–3' tall, 1' wide

Propagation: Seeds

Garden tips: Pinewoods milkweed may be difficult to transplant due to its long taproot and is best propagated from seed. If planted in excessively moist, poorly drained or rich, organic soils, the plant will quickly rot and perish.

Pinewoods milkweed plants are sometimes available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.