

Lemon bacopa

(*Bacopa caroliniana*)

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

Lemon bacopa is a low-growing, herbaceous wildflower that occurs naturally in very moist to aquatic habitats such as along pond and stream margins, and in swamps, marshes and shallow ditches. It typically blooms late spring through fall, but can bloom year-round. Its nectar attracts a variety of small pollinators.

Lemon bacopa's small but showy, purplish-blue flowers are 5-lobed, tubular and copious. Seeds are borne in inconspicuous capsules. Stems are succulent and hairy. Leaves are succulent, clasping and oppositely arranged. They emit a lemony scent when bruised or crushed, giving the plant its common name. They can also be steeped in water to make a flavorful, lemony tea.

A close relative of lemon bacopa is the more commonly occurring herb-of-grace (aka waterhyssop) (*Bacopa monnieri*). Although they look similar and are found in similar habitats, herb-of-grace does not emit a lemon scent. As well, its flowers are pale lavender to white and its leaves are not clasping. Neither *Bacopa* species are related to hyssop (*Hyssopus* sp.), which is in the mint (Lamiaceae) family.

Family: Plantaginaceae (Plantain family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

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

Hardiness: Zones 8–11

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist to wet (saturated or inundated), slightly acidic soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: up to 6" tall but widespreading

Propagation: Cuttings, division

Garden tips: Lemon bacopa makes an excellent groundcover in wet or saturated landscapes. It can spread to form large mats.

Lemon bacopa plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich