Herb-of-grace
(Bacopa monnieri)

Also known as Water hyssop, Herb-of-grace is a creeping, mat-forming perennial that occurs naturally in coastal hammocks and swales, salt marshes, freshwater marshes and swamps, and along river, stream and ditch edges. It typically blooms spring through fall, but may bloom year-round. It attracts a variety of small pollinators, and is a larval host plant for the White peacock butterfly.

The pinkish-white flowers are bell-shaped and five-lobed with a violet center. Each has four stamens and five sepals. Flowers are axillary with small stalks. Leaves are sessile, obovate to spatulate, and succulent. They are oppositely arranged. Leaf margins are entire. Stems are succulent and bright green. Seeds are inconspicuous capsule.

Herb-of-grace has a similar appearance as its cousin, Lemon bacopa (Bacopa caroliniana), and is found in similar habitats. To differentiate them, crush a leaf. If you smell lemon, you know you have Lemon bacopa. Herb-of-grace will not emit a scent. Other distinguishing factors are Lemon bacopa’s purplish-blue flowers and clasping leaves. They were formerly classified in the Scrophulariaceae (figwort) family. Neither species is related to Hyssop (Hyssopus sp.), which is in the Lamiaceae (mint) family.

**Family:** Plantaginaceae (Plantain family)

**Native range:** Nearly throughout

To see where natural populations of Herb-of-grace have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

**Hardiness:** 8B–11

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Moist to wet, well-drained to poorly drained organic soil

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** 1–3”+ tall and sprawling

**Propagation:** Seed, cuttings and division

**Garden tips:** In the right conditions, Herb-of-grace can make a nice groundcover, but it is a fast grower and may spread aggressively. It also works well in a container or hanging pot. The plant is moderately salt-tolerant, but does not tolerate long periods of drought. It can survive in partial sun, but does best when given plenty of sun and water.

Herb-of-grace plants are occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.plantrealflorida.org to find a nursery in your area.