

# False rosemary

(*Conradina canescens*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_botanical\\_terms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms).

False rosemary is a robust, evergreen flowering shrub that rewards gardeners with a display of fragrant flowers. It typically blooms from March through November, but can occur year-round. It occurs naturally in sand pine scrub and sandhills. Many pollinator species are attracted to False rosemary, but bees are its most prominent visitor.

Flowers are purplish-white and two-lipped: the lower lip is three-lobed and bears dark purple spots. Stamens are prominent and run along the inside of the upper lip. Sepals are fused and finely pubescent. Leaves are short and needle-like with a grayish- or silvery-green hue. They are oppositely arranged and grow densely from upright stems that branch from a main woody stem.

False rosemary plants may look like their namesake cousin, whose leaves are used as a savory cooking spice, but these members of the mint family emit a minty-fresh smell when their leaves are crushed.

The species epithet *canescens* comes from the Latin *canescere*, meaning to turn white or gray. It refers to the fine, whitish hair covering the calyx, corolla and leaves.

There are only six species of *Conradina* worldwide; all are native to the United States and four are native to Florida.\*

**Family:** Lamiaceae (Mint family)

**Native range:** Western Panhandle (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Washington, Bay, Jackson, Gulf, Franklin and Wakulla counties) and Hernando, Polk and Highlands counties

To see where natural populations of False rosemary have been vouchered, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).

**Hardiness:** Zones 8A–9B

**Soil:** Extremely dry, sandy soils

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** 2–3+’ tall

**Propagation:** Seed, cuttings

**Garden tips:** False rosemary is drought tolerant, however, in the landscape setting, it may require additional water during extreme droughts. Otherwise, it is an extremely adaptable species that can make a nice addition to a home landscape.

False rosemary plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a native nursery on your area.

\*Some experts consider *Conradina brevifolia* to be its own species, but the Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants considers it a synonym of *Conradina canescens*.



Photo by Lisa Roberts.



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