

# Elliott's lovegrass

(*Eragrostis elliottii*)

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

Elliott's lovegrass is a perennial bunchgrass that occurs naturally in flatwoods, sandhills, prairies and disturbed sites throughout Florida. Its delicate little flowers appear in such abundance that they cover the plant in a billowy beige haze. It typically blooms in fall, but may produce flowers in summer or even year-round. Its seeds are tiny yet prolific, providing plenty of food for invertebrates and small birds, which use the plant's dense foliage for cover, as well.

Elliott's lovegrass flowers are small, whitish beige and borne in wispy panicles. Leaves are long, linear and erect with a silvery or bluish hue. Its fruits are dry, one-seeded caryopses, typical of grasses. Seeds may be dispersed by wind, gravity or on the fur of passing animals.

The genus name of *Eragrostis* comes from the Greek ἔρως (eros), or "love," and ἄγρωστις (agrostis), meaning "grass" (hence the common name). The species epithet *elliottii* and common descriptor "Elliott's" honors American botanist Stephen Elliott (1771–1830).

**Family:** Poaceae (Gramineae) (Grass family)

**Native range:** Throughout Florida

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

**Hardiness:** Zones 8A–11

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Moist to dry, well-drained soils

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** 1–2' tall, equally broad

**Propagation:** Seed, division

**Garden tips:** Elliott's lovegrass can tolerate a variety of conditions. It does well in nutrient-poor soils, is drought-tolerant and can handle limited inundation of both fresh and brackish water. Its clump-forming habit makes it a great choice for a mass or border planting or as a groundcover, particularly because its foliage remains attractive all year. The plant is also helpful in controlling erosion.

**Caution:** A South African cultivar, Wind dancer lovegrass, is often sold, as is the nonnative Weeping lovegrass (*E. curvula*), also from South Africa. Be sure you are purchasing the native species by sourcing from local growers.



Photo by Mary Keim

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. Seeds are generally available through the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative at [www.FloridaWildflowers.com](http://www.FloridaWildflowers.com).