

Wild coco

(*Eulophia alta*)

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

Wild coco is a terrestrial orchid found in hydric hammocks, hardwood swamps, wet flatwoods, marshes and open disturbed sites in Central and South Florida. It blooms from late summer through winter, with peak flowering in fall.

Wild coco's resupinate flowers are composed of a tubular, pink to burgundy calyx with a textured labellum, and three erect, yellowish-green to reddish-brown sepals. Flowers are bilaterally symmetrical and born on long, terminal spikes. Each spike may produce 20 to 30 flowers or more.

Leaves are basal, up to 4 feet long, and strap-like with obvious parallel veins. They bear a slight resemblance to young palm leaves. The root is a tuberous corm. Seeds are born in capsules.

The species epithet *alta* is from the Latin *altus*, meaning "tall." It refers to the tall flower spikes. .

Family: Orchidaceae (Orchid family)

Native range: Most peninsular counties from Flagler and Hernando south

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

Hardiness: Zones 9A–10B

Soil: Moist to wet, well- to poorly drained sandy or calcareous soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 3'+ tall when flowering

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Wild coco is best suited for naturalistic and restoration landscapes, and moist to wet wildflower gardens. The plant will go dormant in spring, but will reemerge when summer rains begin. Plants require little maintenance beyond the removal of spent flowers and stalks. Wild coco may be grown by enthusiasts, but plants are generally not available commercially. It is relatively easy to grow from seed.



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