

# Thistleleaf aster

(*Eurybia eryngiifolia*)

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

Thistleleaf aster is an herbaceous perennial wildflower that occurs only in Florida's eastern Panhandle and in a few neighboring counties in Alabama and Georgia. Its blooms are fairly large. The center disk florets are dull and yellow to reddish. They are surrounded by spidery white to pinkish ray florets. The flower buds are hard and prickly (see photo, right). Stems are rigid and somewhat hairy. Basal leaves occur in a whorled rosette; they are linear to grasslike and slightly spiny. Upper leaves are reduced, sessile and alternately arranged.

Thistleleaf aster blooms in late spring through fall. It occurs naturally in wet prairies, wiregrass savannas and wet pine flatwoods. It is loved by many bees and butterflies.

The genus name *Eurybia* comes from the *eurys*, meaning wide, and *baios*, meaning few. This may refer to the ray florets, which are relatively wide and few as compared to other asters. The species name, *eryngiifolia*, translates loosely as "prickly leaves," to which the common name "thistleleaf" also refers.

**Family:** Asteraceae (Aster, composite or daisy family)

**Native range:** Eastern Panhandle

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

**Hardiness:** Zones 7–8

**Soil:** Moist, rich soils (seasonally variable)

**Growth habit:** up to 3'+ tall

**Propagation:** Seeds

Thistleleaf aster plants are sometimes available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit [PlantRealFlorida.org](http://PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich



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