

Blanketflower

(*Gaillardia pulchella*)

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

Blanketflower, also known as Indian blanket or firewheel, is a brightly colored herbaceous wildflower. Its showy, daisy-like blooms appear as deep pink to reddish ray flowers with yellow tips (although with great variation), and dark red to purplish disk flowers. Its leaves are alternately arranged, narrow yet deeply lobed, and pubescent.

Blanketflower blooms in spring, summer and into fall in North Florida, and year-round in Central and South Florida. The blooms attract a variety of pollinators. It occurs naturally in dry savannahs, coastal dunes and other dry, open areas.

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, daisy or composite family)

Native range: Scattered throughout Florida in 27 counties but favoring the East Coast.

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

Hardiness: Zones 8–11

Soil: Sandy, well-drained to dry soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 1–2' tall, with 1–3' spread

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Blanketflower is a hardy wildflower that is incredibly easy to grow from seed. However, it must have dry sunny conditions, as it will not tolerate shade or too much soil moisture. It is salt-tolerant and is often used in coastal landscapes. Because it is so resilient, it does well in difficult conditions such as along roadsides and in parking lots. Blanketflower is a prolific self-seeder and may take over if allowed. Deadheading of spent flower heads is recommended, as is occasional removal of older plants.

Blanketflower seeds are often available from the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com. Plants are occasionally available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo