

Camphorweed

(*Heterotheca subaxillaris*)

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

Camphorweed is an aromatic, annual to biennial herbaceous shrub. Its copious blooms consist of bright yellow ray florets and vivid yellow to orange disk florets. Leaves are elliptic to lanceolate and alternately arranged with toothed margins. Leaves and stems are covered in bristly hairs and are sticky to the touch.

Camphorweed typically blooms in summer and fall, although in certain conditions it may bloom year-round. In spring, it appears as a basal rosette of rough, almost sagittate leaves from which the flower stalk emerges. It occurs naturally on coastal dunes and grasslands, in scrubs, pinelands and ruderal areas. It is attractive to many bees and butterflies.

As the common name suggests, camphorweed has a camphor-like aroma (or odor, as some might suggest), particularly when the leaves are disturbed.

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, composite or daisy family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

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

Hardiness: Zones 7–10

Soil: Dry, well-drained, sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: up to 3'+ tall with 10–20'+ spread

Propagation: Seeds

Garden tips: Camphorweed is often overlooked as a desirable landscape plant, as it can become weedy in appearance and habit. It is, however, incredibly tolerant of varied and harsh conditions. It can be propagated by seeds, which should be collected when the flower heads appear brown and “fuzzy.” It readily self-sows.



Photo by Alan Cressler, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



“Fuzzy” seed heads. Photo by Thomas Muller, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



Pubescent stems and leaves. Photo by Joseph Marcus, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center