

Carolina redroot

(*Lachnanthes caroliana*)

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

Carolina redroot is a perennial herbaceous wildflower. Flowers are creamy whitish-yellow and are borne in fan-like terminal clusters atop erect, pubescent stems. Leaves are flat, narrow and alternately arranged, giving the plant an iris-like appearance before it blooms.

Carolina redroot blooms from summer into fall. It occurs naturally in wet flatwoods, marshes, bogs, dome swamps, savannas and coastal swales. Its blooms are attractive to a variety of butterflies and moths; its seeds are eaten by birds; and the whole plant is favored by feral hogs, who are known to dig up and eat large patches of redroot.

The common name “redroot” comes from the reddish color of the plant’s roots and rhizomes, which were used by Native Americans for dye.

Family: Haemodoraceae (Bloodwort family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

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

Hardiness: Zones 7–10

Soil: Moist to wet acidic soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 1–3’ tall

Propagation: Seeds, root division

Garden tips: Carolina redroot is fast-growing and is easily propagated from seed and by division of rhizomes. The plant is quick to establish and grows well in most wet conditions, however it has a tendency to spread if not maintained.

Carolina redroot 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 Chris Waltz