

Rose-rush

(*Lygodesmia aphylla*)

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

Rose-rush is a striking perennial wildflower that occurs naturally in sandy flatwoods, scrub, sandhills and pine barrens throughout most of Florida. It is near-endemic, occurring outside of Florida in only a few Georgia counties. It blooms spring through summer; in South Florida, it may bloom into fall. Like other asters, it attracts a variety of pollinators.

Rose-rush flowers are solitary and relatively large (1–2 inches in diameter). Their long ray florets may be pink, lavender or whitish and have toothed tips. Disk florets are absent. Stamen are extended, twisted and conspicuous. Stems are slender, erect and rush-like. They are often branched. Leaves are long, linear and mostly basal. Stem leaves, if present, are reduced and scale-like. Seeds are achenes with silky white pappus that aids in wind dispersion.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, composite or daisy family)

Native range: Most peninsular counties to Collier and Miami-Dade in the south; Eastern Panhandle to Jackson, Calhoun and Gulf on the west

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

Hardiness: Zones 8a–10b

Soil: Well-drained, sandy soil

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 1–2'+ tall

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: While Rose-rush's attractive flowers make a nice addition to wildflower and butterfly gardens, its wiry and leafless stems all but disappear when the plant is not in flower. It makes the best show when planted in clusters. Rose-rush will self-seed more successfully if there are multiple plants; solitary plants often do not produce viable seed.

Rose-rush is typically not available commercially.