

Narrowleaf silkgrass

(*Pityopsis graminifolia*)

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

Also known as Silver-leaved aster, Grass-leaved goldenaster, and Silky golden-aster, Narrowleaf silkgrass is a robust perennial wildflower found in scrub, scrubby flatwoods and pine flatwoods throughout the state. At first glance and when not in bloom, the plant may appear to be a grass. Its flowers bloom in late summer through early winter and attract butterflies and other pollinators.

Flowers are compound with many brilliant yellow ray florets surrounding a compact center of orangish-yellow disk florets. The plant's mostly basal leaves are long, linear and grasslike. They are covered in fine hairs, giving the leaves a silvery hue. Stem leaves are short by comparison, appressed and alternately arranged. Seeds are born in achenes.

The genus name *Pityopsis* is from the Greek *pitys*, or "pine." It is a reference to the nymph *Pitys*, who, in Greek mythology, was changed into a pine tree by the gods. The species epithet *graminifolia* is from the Latin *gramen*, or "grass," and *folius*, or "leaf."



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, daisy or composite family)

Native range: Throughout Florida

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

Hardiness: Zones 8A–11

Soil: Well-drained, sandy soil

Exposure: Dry to moist, well-drained sandy or calcareous soil

Growth habit: 1' tall, 2' tall when blooming

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Narrowleaf silkgrass blooms later than many Florida native wildflowers. It is easy to establish and maintain in a garden setting. Its silky foliage can make a dense groundcover in dry to moist soils. The plant spreads by underground rhizomes; a single plant can spread and densely cover a much larger area.

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.