

Mock bishopsweed

(*Ptilimnium capillaceum*)

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

Mock bishopsweed is a delicate little annual that is too often disregarded as a weed. But it is a great wildflower for attracting pollinators. Its many dainty white flowers are born in compound umbels that are encircled at their base by threadlike bracts. Stems are slender, hollow and branched. Leaves are compound with finely dissected leaflets, giving it a thin, wispy appearance. Seeds are ovoid and less than 1/8" long.

Despite its small stature, a mass of mock bishopsweed is both attractive and ecologically beneficial. Though the flowers are tiny, their nectar is easily accessible to the many pollinators, including flies and wasps. It is also the larval host plant for the Black swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*) butterfly.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo

Mock bishopsweed typically blooms in spring and summer. It occurs naturally in swamps, marshes, coastal swales, ditches and along pond edges.

Like most members of the Apiaceae family, mock bishopsweed has a long taproot, which helps the plants survive "hazards" such as drought and being eaten by Black swallowtail caterpillars.

Family: Apiaceae (Umbelliferae, celery, carrot or parsley family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

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

Hardiness: Zones 7–11

Soil: Moist to wet soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 12–18"

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Mock bishopsweed usually volunteers itself into a landscape, particularly in sites that are wet or watered regularly. It is a prolific self-seeder, so be sure to thin it out before it goes to seed; it can take over if you allow it.

Mock bishopsweed plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.