

Tropical sage

(*Salvia coccinea*)

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

Known by many names — Scarlet sage, Tropical sage, Red salvia, Blood sage — this versatile perennial wildflower is a steadfast addition to any wildflower garden. The flower spike consists of bright red, tubular blooms that are about 1" long. Flowers are loosely arranged in whorls and extend 90 degrees out from square, upright stems. Leaves are deltoid- to oval-shaped and have toothed margins and relatively long petioles. They are oppositely arranged. Seeds are born in capsules.

Tropical sage is a flower that no pollinator can resist, but it is particularly attractive to bees, large butterflies and hummingbirds. It typically blooms in summer and fall, but can bloom year-round in many parts of the state. It occurs naturally in hammocks, woodlands and disturbed sites.

Family: Lamiaceae (Mint family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

To see where natural populations of Tropical sage has been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8–10

Soil: Well-drained, sandy to rich, moderately moist soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 2–4'+ tall

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Tropical sage is highly adaptable to a variety of conditions. It is self-sowing and its seeds remain in the soil and will germinate throughout the year. It is drought tolerant.

Tropical sage is often available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich