

Eastern silver aster

(*Symphyotrichum concolor*)

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

Eastern silver aster is a winsome wildflower found in Florida's pineland habitats. It typically blooms in fall but may bloom in summer and early winter (or year-round in South Florida). Its many flowers provide nectar for a variety of butterflies.

Eastern silver aster's flowers consist of lavender to bluish-purple ray florets surrounding a compact center of creamy white disk florets. Anthers are reddish-brown and extended. Leaves are linear and covered with a silky, silvery pubescence (hence its common name of "silver" aster). They are alternately arranged and slightly appressed. Bracts are pubescent with purplish uppers and green undersides. Fruit is an inconspicuous achene.



Eastern silver aster (Symphyotrichum concolor) bloom; flower buds with purple pubescent bracts in background. Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, daisy or composite family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida with heavier concentration in Panhandle and north/north-central peninsula

To see where natural populations of Eastern silver aster have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8–11

Soil: Moist, well-drained sandy or calcareous soil

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 1–3'

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Eastern silver aster is suitable for naturalistic landscapes and restorations. It should be planted with grasses and taller wildflowers to help support its stem. The plant grows in low-nutrient soils and is very drought tolerant.

Eastern silver aster is often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.