

String lily

(*Crinum americanum*)

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

Also known as Seven sisters or Swamp lily, String lily is an erect, emergent perennial with showy, fragrant blooms. Its large white flowers have no petals. Rather, they have long, linear to lanceolate tepals that are fused at the base, forming a tubelike bud. Once open, the tepals curve backwards, exposing long stamens topped by conspicuous reddish-purple anthers. Leaves are dark green and linear with finely toothed margins. Flower stalks and leaves grow directly from a bulb. Seeds are formed in capsules.



Photo by Emily Bell

String lily is found in wet hammocks, marshes, swamps, wetland edges, and along streams and rivers throughout Florida and the southeast United States. It is pollinated by Sphinx moths and is a larval host for the Spanish moth (*Xanthopastis timais*).

The bulbs and leaves are poisonous to humans, but are a favorite treat of lubber grasshoppers. It was once placed in the Lily or Liliaceae family, but has since been moved to the Amaryllis family.

Family: Amaryllidaceae (Amaryllis family)

Native range: Most central and south peninsula counties, some coastal and western Panhandle counties

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

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Requires wet, rich soil

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 2-3' tall

Propagation: Seed, division

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: String lily is often confused with its cousin, the spider lily (*Hymenocallis* sp.) as they look very similar and grow in the same conditions. Both make beautiful additions to wet landscapes, including along retention ponds.

String lily is often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.