

Drumheads

(*Senega cruciata*)

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

Drumheads is a low-growing wildflower that blooms from late spring through fall. Its flowers are tiny, yellowish-white and tubular. They are surrounded by large, showy pink bracts that are easily mistaken as the flower's petals. The inflorescence develops as a cylindrical cluster at the terminal end of the flower stalk. Leaves are short, linear and arranged in whorls of four.



Photo by Emily Bell

Drumheads occur naturally throughout most of Florida in wet pinelands, savannas and other open wetland habitats, as well as along marsh edges. Although the flowerheads are conspicuous, the plant is easy to overlook as it is often obscured by the grasses and other forbs that grow with it.

The species epithet, *cruciata*, means "cross-shaped," hence the plant's other common names, cross milkwort, cross-leaf milkwort and cross-leaf drumheads.

Family: Polygalaceae (Milkwort family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

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

Lifespan: Annual

Soil: Moist to inundated soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 4–12"

Note: Research published in 2023 assigned the New World clade of *Polygala* to the genus *Senega* (Pastore et al). This species was previously known as *Polygala cruciata* and is likely still listed as such in many online and print resources.

Drumheads are not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see them.

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PLANT PROFILE:

