

Four-petal St. John's wort

(*Hypericum tetrapetalum*)

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

Four-petal St. John's wort is an evergreen perennial shrub. Its blooms are bright lemon-yellow with four petals and four sepals. Leaves are ovate- to cordate-shaped, oppositely arranged and have entire margins. They clasp the stem. Leaves tend to be bluish-green, but may also be yellowish-green or reddish. Stems are glabrous and woody at the base.



Photo by Mary Keim

Four-petal St. John's wort can bloom throughout the year, but late spring is usually its best bloom time. It occurs naturally in moist flatwoods, sandhills and ruderal areas. It is considered a near-endemic species as it occurs only in Florida and limited parts of southern Georgia. It is attractive to bees.

Some taxonomists place the *Hypericum* genus in the Clusiaceae family, of which they consider Hypericaceae to be a subfamily (Hypericoideae). The species epithet *tetrapetalum* is from the Greek *tetra* or "four" and *petalon* meaning "petal or leaf." It, like the common name, alludes to the flower's four petals.

Family: Hypericaceae (St. John's wort family)

Native range: Nearly throughout

To see where natural populations of Four-petal St. John's wort have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist organic soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 2–3' tall; may also be prostrate or spreading

Propagation: Seed

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: Once established, four-petal St. John's wort is easy to maintain in a landscape setting. It does best in moist soil and full sun, but can handle drier soils in partial shade. It does not do as well in drought conditions.

Four-petal St. John's wort is occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.

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Florida Wildflower Foundation • P O Box 941691, Maitland, FL 32794-1691 • 407-622-1606 • www.FlaWildflowers.org

