

Standing cypress

(*Ipomopsis rubra*)

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

Standing cypress is a brilliant, biennial herbaceous wildflower. Its inflorescence is a dense, elongated, terminal spike of long, bright red, tubular flowers. Calyces and corollas are each five-lobed. Its pinnate leaves are fern- or needle-like, sessile and alternately arranged. Stems are pubescent. Seeds are born in a capsule. Standing cypress begins as a basal rosette of fern-like foliage. In its second year, it will send up an erect, leafy stem that looks a bit like dog fennel until it blooms into a spectacular spray of scarlet.



Photo by Emily Bell

Standing cypress blooms summer through fall and occurs naturally in sandhills, coastal strands, beach dunes and ruderal areas. It is very attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies as well as other pollinators.

Contrary to what its common name might suggest, Standing cypress is not related in any way to the cypress tree (*Taxodium* sp.) It might, however, refer to the plant's leaves, which vaguely resemble cypress needles. Other common names are Spanish larkspur, Texas plume and skyrocket.

Family: Polemoniaceae (Phlox family)

Native range: North and central peninsula; Escambia, Jackson and Leon Counties

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

Lifespan: Biennial

Soil: Well-drained, sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 3'+ tall

Propagation: Seeds

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central

Garden tips: Standing cypress is a great landscape addition if you want to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. It is very sensitive, however, and is susceptible to root rot if its soil doesn't drain to its needs. It is a moderate self-seeder.

Standing cypress is often available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area. Seeds are available from the Florida Wildflower Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com.

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