

FLORIDA WILDFLOWER FOUNDATION

Coreopsis – Florida's State Wildflower

Florida's state wildflower is comprised of all 15 *Coreopsis* species that occur here, and most are considered native to Florida. *Coreopsis* species are commonly referred to as tickseed because of the bug or tick-like appearance of the seed (which is actually a type of fruit called an achene). The small seed is ovalish to round with two short spines at one end.

Coreopsis is member of the daisy or aster family, *Asteraceae*, which was formerly known as the *Compositae* family. Plants in this family are frequently called 'composites' because the inflorescences are comprised of two types of flowers – the showy ray flowers we know as petals, and the nonshowy disk flowers in the center. The daisy-like flowers of Florida's *Coreopsis* vary from about $\frac{3}{4}$ to nearly 2 inches in diameter, and in all but one case are bright yellow. The lone exception is the swamp or Georgia coreopsis (*Coreopsis nudata*), which has pink flowers. It is found only in moist areas in north Florida, including roadside ditches and swales.



Coastalplain coreopsis flowering in the fall along a roadside in the Florida panhandle.

Coreopsis in Florida vary in the habitat in which they grow, flowering season and range. All 15 species grow in some part of the northern half of Florida. In South Florida, the number of *Coreopsis* species is very limited, with Leavenworth's coreopsis (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*) being the most common by far. Florida coreopsis (*Coreopsis floridana*) also grows in South Florida. It is endemic to Florida – that is, it is found nowhere else in the world. Until a few years ago, Leavenworth's coreopsis (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*) was thought to be endemic to Florida, too, until a few populations were discovered in Alabama.

Most *Coreopsis* species in Florida are either annuals or short-lived perennials, and generally display peak flowering in spring to early summer or in the fall. Species commonly seen along roadsides, besides swamp coreopsis, are goldenmane coreopsis or dye flower (*C. basalis*), lanceleaf coreopsis (*C. lanceolata*), Leavenworth's coreopsis, Florida coreopsis and coastalplain coreopsis (*C. gladiata*).



Jeff Norcini, PhD
Ecological Horticulturist
(850) 491-0910 OecoHort@comcast.net
<http://www.OecoHort.com>

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