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This map features wildflower viewing areas that are managed for naturally occurring wildflowers. There are many other roadsides where wildflowers flourish. You'll frequently see spring wildflowers along Interstate 10 and spring and fall flowers along many rural roads.

Learn more

- ✿ FlaWildflowers.org
- ✿ VisitFlorida.com
- ✿ FloridaStateParks.org
- ✿ MyFWC.org/viewing/where



Large stands of wildflowers that appear after fire often are easily viewed from roadsides, forest roads and trails.

Photo by John Moran

Celebrating 500 years of La Florida

On Easter Sunday in 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon sighted land near what is now St. Augustine. He dubbed it *La Florida* — “land of flowers” — in honor of Spain’s Easter celebration. The land’s abundant spring wildflowers may also have influenced the name choice.

Hundreds of years later, the number of wildflowers that thrive in wild places and along roadsides and trails is greatly diminished. However, many organizations and agencies now are working to conserve and preserve wildflowers, especially along roadsides.

Efforts to beautify roadsides with wildflowers began with local garden and civic clubs. A statewide effort took root in the 1960s when motorists gave rave reviews to non-native Crimson clover, which cropped up in sod planted by the Florida Department of Transportation on US Highway 27 south of Tallahassee.

Because native wildflowers are adapted to Florida’s climate, soils, insects and diseases, roadside planting programs gradually have grown to include more of them. Naturally occurring wildflowers also are being managed with mowing practices that keep them flourishing. These efforts have been supported by:

- ✿ The **Florida State Wildflower license plate** and the **Florida Wildflower Foundation**, which provide funds for native wildflower education, planting and research.

- ✿ The Florida Department of Transportation’s **Wildflower Management Program**, which was created in 2004 and revised in 2014 in response to increased interest and enthusiasm for roadside wildflowers.
- ✿ The development of a native wildflower seed-production industry, which began in the late 1990s.

- ✿ The **Florida Federation of Garden Clubs’ Paths of Sunshine Awards**, which recognize and promote the conservation, restoration, management and planting of native plants and wildflowers on Florida roadsides.

Coreopsis, commonly called Tickseed, was declared Florida’s State Wildflower in 1991. Sixteen species occur in Florida.



Native wildflowers are recognized in Florida’s state seal because of their cultural significance to its indigenous people and settlers.

What is a native wildflower?

In general, the Florida Wildflower Foundation defines “Florida native wildflowers” as any flowering herbaceous species that grew wild within the state’s natural ecosystems in the 1560s when Florida’s first botanical records were created. Also recognized as native are flowering plants and grasses introduced before that time by Native Americans through travel and trade, and wildflowers introduced without aid of human intervention.

Get Involved Conserve, preserve, protect

Help preserve Florida’s native wildflowers on roadsides by urging your county to adopt wildflower-friendly mowing practices. Visit the Florida Wildflower Foundation web site to download a county resolution to present. Support work for wildflowers by purchasing a State Wildflower license plate or by making a donation to the Florida Wildflower Foundation. Visit FlaWildflowers.org to learn more.



The Florida Panhandle – a great place to see native wildflowers

The Florida Panhandle’s high percentage of public lands makes it a splendid place to see wildflowers in natural ecosystems. These holdings include the Apalachicola National Forest, a number of state forests and wildlife management areas, large natural areas surrounding two US Air Force bases, and land owned by the Northwest Florida Water Management District. Private conservation organizations such as Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy also own and/or manage substantial acreage.

Most of this land is routinely managed by prescribed fire, which promotes the growth of native wildflowers and grasses. Soil characteristics also are key. Many wildflowers thrive in the moist, slightly acidic fine-sand soils abundant in the Panhandle. In addition, cool winters, warm summers and plentiful rainfall (more than 60 inches annually) help support wildflower growth.



State Wildflower license plate

Support Florida’s wildflowers, wildlife and wild places by purchasing the State Wildflower license plate! Each plate sold and renewed brings more flowers to Florida. Learn more at FlaWildflowers.org.

Wildflower viewing tips

- ✿ Spring and fall typically are the best seasons to view showy stands of wildflowers, but check moist areas in the summer for flowers such as meadowbeauty, hibiscus, and rosegiant.

- ✿ Visit the Panhandle wildflower web page, FlaWildflowerTrips.org, to see prime viewing spots and photos submitted by visitors and residents.
- ✿ The best places to see showy wildflowers are rural areas (especially moist ones), recently burned natural areas and infrequently mowed roadsides.
- ✿ Please don’t pick wildflowers. If you want to preserve your memories, take a picture — it will last longer. Picking flowers reduces a species’ ability to sustain itself. Picking the flowers of endangered or threatened species is illegal (*see Florida Statute 581.185 Preservation of native flora of Florida*). Spread the beauty — send your photos to photos@flawildflowers.org.
- ✿ Stopping on the road or shoulder to view or photograph wildflowers can be hazardous to you and other motorists. Many Panhandle roadsides have pullouts where you can park to explore the roadside.
- ✿ For more information on Florida’s native wildflowers, visit the Florida Wildflower Foundation website, FlaWildflowers.org.

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Photo by John Moran



VISIT FLORIDA.COM
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FLORIDA WILDFLOWER FOUNDATION

Common Panhandle Wildflowers



Conoclinium coelestinum
Blue mistflower
Blue mistflower is a sure sign that autumn has arrived, or is certainly not far away. Spreading rapidly by underground runners, this aggressive herbaceous perennial forms large colonies of 1-3'-tall plants. The numerous compact heads of deep blue or purple flowers add significant charm to October roadsides.
Fall



Symphyotrichum adnatum
Scaleleaf aster
This is one of several blue-flowered asters found along Panhandle roadsides. It is a low-growing species with tiny, awl-shaped leaves that point upward and tightly hug the stem. Chapman's aster (*Symphyotrichum chapmanii*) has similar flowers but grows much taller, with a slender arching stem that is nearly devoid of leaves.
Spring, Summer, Fall



Amsonia ciliata
Fringed bluestar
Two species of bluestar occur in the Panhandle, one in wet woodlands, and the other along the backslope of dry, sandy roadsides. The stem is about 2' tall with very narrow leaves. It is topped by a showy cluster of pale blue to bluish-white star-shaped flowers.
Spring



Salvia lyrata
Lyreleaf sage
The lavender-blue flowers of Lyreleaf sage often dominate early spring roadsides. Plants average 1-2' tall with a single upright stalk and a whorl-like cluster of ground-hugging leaves.
Spring



Carphephorus odoratissimus
Vanilla leaf
This single-stemmed, fall-blooming herb ranges from 1-4' tall and has numerous densely packed heads of tiny purple flowers. It typically occurs in large, conspicuous colonies that are especially notable when flowers are present. It is known as vanilla leaf because of the scent of its leaves.
Fall



Liatris
Blazing star
About a dozen species of blazing stars occur in the central Panhandle, all of which have erect, spike-like inflorescences. Species vary from 2-6' tall and usually occur in showy colonies along moist or dry roadsides. The individual flowers are small, 5-lobed, and star-shaped, which explains the common name. Pictured here is Chapman's blazing star (*Liatris chapmanii*).
Summer, Fall



Cirsium
Thistle
The several thistles that occur along Florida's roadsides are among our most distinctive wildflowers. Although their flower structure is similar, flower color can range from yellow to pinkish, or purplish. Purple thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*) is characterized by a treacherous nest of prickly, leaf-like bracts under the flower head.
Spring, Summer



Vernonia
Ironweed
Ironweeds are tall, wispy plants with striking purple flowers and an upright form. Plants average 3-5' tall, usually with several upright stems. Some prefer dry sites, others moist roadsides. Look for them in autumn.
Fall



Lupinus villosus
Lady lupine
Lady lupine is one of the more common of our native lupines. The dense cluster of hairy, blue-gray leaves and erect 1-2' spikes of lavender to pinkish flowers make a conspicuous display along dry, sandy roadsides.
Spring



Monarda punctata
Dotted horsemint
Dotted horsemint is worth stopping for. The large purplish-pink bracts and spotted yellow flowers are exquisite when seen close up, and the minty aroma only adds to the sensory appeal. Handling any part of the plant can impart a pleasing fragrance to the skin.
Fall



Agalinis
False foxglove
The attractive lavender or purple flowers of our several false foxgloves are harbingers of autumn. Most begin to flower in late summer but are at their best in September and October. About a dozen species occur in our region, many of which are difficult to distinguish from each other.
Summer, Fall



Rhexia
Meadowbeauty
As their name suggests, meadowbeauties prefer treeless savannas, open bogs and sunny roadsides. There are about a dozen species, most of which have lavender or purple flowers with large yellow hooklike anthers. They are one of our most abundant groups of summer-blooming wildflowers. Nash's meadowbeauty (*Rhexia nashii*) is pictured here.
Summer



Sabatia
Rosegentian
Rosegentians are summer delights. About a dozen species occur in the Panhandle, some with white flowers, others with pink flowers. Roadside species usually have five or 10 petals. Bartman's rosegentian (*Sabatia decandra*), pictured, is bright pink with 10 petals.
Summer



Coreopsis nudata
Pink Coreopsis
Our only pink-flowered *Coreopsis* is found mostly in the Panhandle. Plants can grow to 5' tall and often occur in large showy colonies, with numerous flowerheads adding a conspicuous splash of color to wet ditches. Pink Coreopsis is common along several of this brochure's recommended routes.
Spring



Calopogon barbatus
Grasspink orchid
Several species of grasspink orchids occur along the routes recommended here. All have "upside-down" flowers, with the lip petal pointing upward rather than downward. The patch of showy hairs at the top of the lip resembles stamens and are an adaptation designed to attract bees and other pollinators. Pictured here is Bearded grasspink orchid (*Calopogon barbatus*).
Spring



Ipomoea cordatriloba
Tievine
Like the showy blossoms of most morning glories, Tievine flowers fade quickly as the day progresses. Its flowers are funnel-shaped, less than 2" long, and range in color from pink to rose-purple. It is conspicuous as it scrambles over roadside vegetation in late summer and autumn.
Summer, Fall



Stenanthium densum
Crowpoison, Osceola's plume
Natural and prescribed fire is a well-known wildflower catalyst. This is certainly true of Crowpoison, which sends up its slender 3' stems and cone-shaped inflorescences within days or weeks following a growing season burn. The small individual flowers start out white, but turn purplish as they age.
Spring



Zephyranthes
Rainlily
Rainlilies often flower immediately following a downpour. Two species occur in our region. Both have shiny green grasslike leaves and white trumpet-shaped flowers. One species grows along the margins of moist roadside ditches, the other mostly in shady hardwood forests. They are very similar.
Spring



Eupatorium
Thoroughwort, Fennel
At least half of the nearly 20 thoroughworts that grace Florida's roadsides occur in the Panhandle. All have tiny white flowers borne in congested heads at the top of a branched inflorescence. The species pictured here is *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Common boneset.
Summer, Fall



Baptisia alba
White wild indigo
This large, shrubby bean stands 3-4' tall. In early to mid-spring it produces numerous tall, showy racemes of creamy white pea flowers that are unmistakable. It prefers moist, open roadsides in full sun.
Mid-Spring



Erigeron
Daisy fleabane
The daisy fleabanes are among the most common roadside wildflowers. They are easily recognized by their daisylike flowerheads with a dark center surrounded by numerous small, laterally spreading rays. At least four species occur in the Panhandle. Early whitetop fleabane (*Erigeron vernus*), pictured, blooms in spring.
Spring, Summer



Eriocaulon decangulare
Tenangle pipewort
The erect 1-3'-tall arrow-straight stem, topped by a buttonlike cluster of creamy-white flowers, suggests the decorative pin used to hold a lady's hat to her head. These clump-forming perennials are denizens of wet roadside ditches and often occur in large, conspicuous colonies.
Spring, Summer, Fall



Eurybia eryngiifolia
Thistleleaf aster
The disheveled appearance of the thin creamy-white rays surrounding a dark-brown center sets this species apart from other asters. Its Florida range is restricted to the several counties of the central Panhandle, and it is common along roadsides in early summer, especially in the Apalachicola National Forest.
Spring, Summer



Rhynchospora latifolia
Whitetop sedge
Not many sedges make the list of showy bloomers. *Rhynchospora latifolia* is one of two species of Whitetop sedge that are the exceptions. The white structures below the flowers are actually leaflike bracts, but their effect is that of flower petals.
Spring, Summer



Lachnanthes carolina
Redroot
Redroot makes its appearance in late May, with its peak flowering in mid- to late June. Its 2' stem is crowned by a white and yellow inflorescence and is very showy. Large populations of several hundred plants often occupy wet roadside ditches and are easily spotted, even at highway speed.
Summer



Lophiola aurea
Golden crest
This wetland-loving herb stands 1-3' tall and prefers savannas and wet ditches. The whitish, hairy stem supports a branching inflorescence. The scientific epithet *aurea* means golden, a fitting description of the flower color.
Spring, Summer, Fall



Pyrrohapappus carolinianus
Carolina desert chicory
This yellow-flowered member of the Aster family begins blooming as early as February and continues throughout the spring, even into mid-summer. Its slender stem is about 2' tall and is terminated by a dense head consisting only of soft yellow ray flowers. Unlike the Black-eyed Susan and most other species in this family, the flower head lacks a central disk.
Spring, Summer



Hypericum
St. John's wort
More than 20 species of St. John's wort occur in the Panhandle, many along roadsides and woodland margins. All have yellow 4- or 5-petaled flowers with a brushlike mass of yellow stamens. Peilbark St. John's wort (*Hypericum fasciculatum*), pictured, flowers in the spring.
Spring, Summer, Fall



Packera glabella
Butterweed
Butterweed is one of our earliest blooming native wildflowers, sometimes flowering as early as January. It stands about 2' tall and prefers low roadsides and wet ditches. The golden flowers and deeply divided leaves are distinctive.
Spring



Coreopsis
Coreopsis, Tickseed
Coreopsis is Florida's state wildflower. Sixteen species occur in the state. Most, like this Lanceleaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), have yellow disk flowers with ray flowers notched at the tips. Lanceleaf Coreopsis is one of Florida's more common, showy spring wildflowers.
Spring, Summer, Fall



Baldinia
Honeycombhead
Honeycombhead usually occurs in large showy populations, with thousands of plants stretching across the wet savannas of the Apalachicola National Forest. Two species occur in the Panhandle, including one that prefers dry, sandy roadsides. Both bloom in autumn.
Fall



Helianthus heterophyllus
Sunflower
This sunflower is among the showiest of Florida's fall wildflowers, decorating moist road shoulders and wet roadside ditches. The state is home to other *Helianthus* species, most of which have yellow petals circling a brown or yellow center. The only exception is the Rayless sunflower.
Fall



Rudbeckia mohrii
Mohr's coneflower
Soft greeneyes takes its name from its flowerheads, which have a round green disk at the center of eight bright yellow rays. The stem is 8-32" tall with conspicuous 4" leaves. It is most often seen on dry, open, sandy roadsides.
Spring, Summer



Berlandiera pumila
Soft greeneyes
Soft greeneyes takes its name from its flowerheads, which have a round green disk at the center of eight bright yellow rays. The stem is 8-32" tall with conspicuous 4" leaves. It is most often seen on dry, open, sandy roadsides.
Spring, Summer



Aletris lutea
Yellow colicroot
Yellow colicroot can dominate moist to wet roadsides during its mid- to late spring flowering period. The stiffly erect, 3' stem arises from a flattened whorl of ground-hugging leaves and is terminated by a spike-like inflorescence of bright yellow, tubular flowers.
Spring



Helenium
Sneezeweed
Several species of sneezeweed are found along Florida roadsides. Savanna sneezeweed (*Helenium vernale*), pictured, is about 3' tall and blooms in mid-spring. It is typical of the group. At least one species flowers in summer.
Spring, Summer



Solidago
Goldenrod
The narrow spike-like inflorescences of goldenrods give them their common name. They are among our most recognized native wildflowers and usually bloom in the fall. Species vary from 2-6' tall and prefer open roadsides in full sun.
Fall



Sarracenia
Pitcherplants
Northwest Florida is well known for its assortment of insectivorous pitcherplants, at least four species of which can be seen along our recommended roadsides. The trumpet-like leaves of the Yellow pitcherplant (*Sarracenia flava*), shown here, can be 2' tall. All can be seen along wet to moist roadsides, especially along SR 65 and the Apalachee Savannas Scenic Byway.
Spring, Summer



Platanthera
Fringed and Fringeless orchid
Several of these upright, 1-3'-tall orchids can be found along moist or boggy roadsides, especially in the Apalachicola National Forest. Flower color ranges from bright white to yellow or orange. Blooming begins in June for the white-flowered forms, with a succession of oranges and yellows from mid-July into August. Pictured here is Crested fringed orchid (*Platanthera cristata*).
Summer



Asclepias lanceolata
Lanceleaf milkweed
Milkweeds are most easily recognized by their unique flowers and best known for their attractiveness to butterflies. Some are low-growing; others tall and conspicuous. Flower color ranges from white to lavender, green, yellow, or bright orange-red. Lanceleaf milkweed can be 3-4' tall, which makes it a conspicuous component of wet roadside ditches.
Spring, Summer



Campsis radicans
Trumpet creeper
The tubular orange-red flowers of Trumpet creeper make their first appearance in late spring but continue into summer. This is a high-climbing woody vine with lacy leaves. Look for it scaling trees and shrubs just off the road shoulder.
Spring, Summer



Helianthus radula
Rayless sunflower
Rayless sunflower stands in stark contrast to Florida's other *Helianthus* species. Although its flowerhead lacks the bright yellow rays associated with most species, its dark brown disk more than makes up for the loss. Its sheer abundance in wet savannas and ditches ensures it won't be missed.
Fall



Rudbeckia graminifolia
Grassleaf coneflower
The combination of short brick-red rays and large conelike disk sets Grassleaf coneflower apart. It can be abundant in savannas and on moist roadsides, where hundreds of the 2' stems can dot the landscape, each topped with a single flower head.
Summer



Trillium
Wakerobin
You'll have to find a shady hardwood forest to see our native trilliums. The leaves of these long-lived perennials make their annual appearance in late winter and flower in early spring, well before the trees put on new leaves. Chattahoochee Nature Park, Torreya State Park and Jackson Mounds are good destinations to search for these interesting plants.
Spring



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This project received financial assistance from VISIT FLORIDA
All photos on this page by Gil Nelson, PhD.
See these flowers and more online at FlaWildflowerTrips.org.