

# Florida greeneyes

(*Berlandiera subacaulis*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_botanical\\_terms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms).

Florida greeneyes is a perennial herbaceous wildflower endemic to Florida. It occurs naturally in sandhills, dry pine flatwoods and mixed upland forests, as well as along dry roadsides and in ruderal areas. Its bright blooms typically appear in spring and attract a variety of bees and butterflies.

Florida greeneyes' flowers are solitary and terminal. They consist of vibrant yellow ray florets, each with a notched tip and "grooved" surface, surrounding a head of greenish-yellow tubular disk florets. When open, they reveal maroon anthers and yellow stigmas. The flowers are held at their base by a cup of bright green overlapping bracts. The plant's dark green leaves are ovately shaped with crenate margins when young; older leaves may appear more deeply lobed. Leaves are mostly basal and may be petiolate or sessile. Leaf undersides are covered in soft hairs. Stems are short and usually hairy. The taproot is thick and tuberous. Seeds develop in cypselsae, which are attached to the bracts and mature into a distinctive, plate-like seedhead. Only ray florets produce seed.

The genus name *Berlandiera* refers to 19th century naturalist Jean-Louis Berlandier, who collected botanical specimens in Mexico and Texas. The species epithet *subacaulis* is from the Latin *sub*, meaning "under," and *acaule*, or "stemless." It refers to the plant's short stem.

Florida greeneyes, along with other *Berlandiera* species, informally have been referred to as "chocolate flowers" because the open disk florets emit a subtle chocolatey fragrance.

**Family:** Asteraceae (Daisy family)

**Native range:** Eastern Panhandle, north and central peninsula, Lee and Monroe counties

To see where Florida greeneyes occurs naturally, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).

**Hardiness:** Zones 8B–10B

**Soil:** Dry to moderately moist, well-drained sandy, rocky or calcareous soils

**Exposure:** Full sun to minimal shade

**Growth habit:** 1–2' when blooming

**Propagation:** Seed, root division

**Garden tips:** Florida greeneyes is easy to establish in the garden. Its tuberous root, which can be as thick as 12 inches in older plants, makes it very drought tolerant. Seeds can be collected after ray florets drop. Propagation by division is possible but may be difficult, as plants are joined by the thick root. Once established, Florida greeneyes requires little maintenance. It can form large clumps and produce copious blooms, creating a beautiful spring display.

Florida greeneyes seeds are available from the Florida Wildflower Cooperative at [www.FloridaWildflowers.com](http://www.FloridaWildflowers.com). Plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo



Plate-like seed head. Photo by Stacey Matrazzo