

# Beggar's tick

(*Bidens alba*)

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

No matter what you call it — beggar's tick, Spanish needle, monkey's lice — *Bidens alba* is likely the most underappreciated of all Florida's native wildflower. It is often considered a weed because it reproduces so prolifically, but it is a wonderful native wildflower for attracting pollinators. It is the larval host plant for the Dainty sulphur butterfly and a favorite nectar source for a myriad of butterflies including. In Florida, it is the third most common source of nectar for honey production. Its young leaves and flowers are edible

Beggar's tick blooms are comprised of five to eight white ray florets surrounding many yellow tubular disk florets. Leaves begin simple and oppositely arranged. As they mature, they

become compound with lobed leaflets that have hairy undersides and toothed margins. Seeds have two barb-like bristles on the end that stick to clothing, hair and animal fur.

The name *Bidens* comes from the Latin words *bis*, meaning "two," and *dens*, meaning "tooth." *Alba* refers to the white ray florets.

**Family:** Asteraceae (Aster, daisy or composite family)

**Native range:** Throughout Florida

*To see where natural populations of Beggar's tick has been vouchered, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).*

**Hardiness:** Zones 8A–11

**Soil:** Dry, well-drained sandy soils to rich, moist soils

**Exposure:** Full sun to partial shade

**Growth habit:** 1–4' tall with spread of several feet

**Propagation:** Seed

**Garden tips:** A single plant can produce 3,000-6,000 seeds that are dispersed by wind and water, but most often become attached to fur or clothing. If you don't want them to take over your garden, you must be persistent in pulling the the plants before they go to seed.



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