

Florida scrub roseling

(*Callisia ornata*)

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

Florida scrub roseling is a beautiful and delicate wildflower endemic to Florida, where it occurs in sandhill and scrub habitats. It typically blooms spring through fall and attracts a variety of pollinators — especially bees. A member of the dayflower family, the plant is a close relative of (and its blooms look very similar to) *Tradescantia* and *Commelina* species. And like these species, the Florida scrub roseling flower is ephemeral, meaning it opens in the morning and closes by early afternoon.

Flowers have three pink to pinkish-white petals with scalloped margins. Six stamens are present, each with a bright yellow anther and “bearded” filament. Leaves are long, thin and grasslike with entire margins. They are alternately arranged and form a sheath at the base of the stem. Seeds are born in small, globular capsules.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo

The genus name *Callisia* is derived from the Greek word *kallos*, meaning “beauty.” Although the flowers are quite lovely, it is the leaves of *Callisia repens*, a non-native species with interesting foliage, for which this genus is named. The species epithet *ornata* is from the Latin *ornatus*, meaning “decorated” or “beautiful” and refers to the elegant flowers. *Callisia ornata* is formerly known as *Cuthbertia ornata*.

Family: Commelinaceae (Dayflower or spiderwort family)

Native range: Central and southern peninsular Florida (excluding Monroe and Miami-Dade counties), as well as Gulf, Franklin and Wakulla counties in the Panhandle

To see where natural populations of Florida scrub roseling have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Annual to short-lived perennial

Hardiness: Zones 8B–10A

Soil: Dry, well-drained, sandy soil

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 6–12”+ tall

Propagation: Division, seed

Garden tips: Florida scrub roseling may be difficult to establish and maintain in a landscape setting, particularly because it generally performs as an annual. It is, however, a prolific self-seeder and will repopulate in open, sandy areas.

Plants are occasionally available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery near you.