

# Pink sundew

(*Drosera capillaris*)

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

Pink sundew is an insectivorous wildflower that grows in abundance in wet pinelands, savannas and bogs, where it can form a glistening red carpet. It is often found growing alongside other insectivores such as pitcherplants (*Sarracenia* spp.), bladderworts (*Utricularia* spp.) and butterworts (*Pinguicula* spp.). The plant typically blooms in spring but may bloom in summer and fall. Its semi-showy flowers open in the morning in bright sunny conditions and close by late afternoon. They occasionally attract small insects but are believed to be self-pollinated.

Pink sundew's delicate flowers are pale-pink with five petals and a superior greenish-yellow ovary. They develop in numbers of two to 20 atop a glabrous leafless scape. Leaves are lime-green to crimson red and spatulate with relatively long petioles. They are prostrate and born in basal rosettes. Petioles are glabrous, but leaf blades are covered in tentacle-like glands that secrete a sticky, acidic substance in which insects become trapped. The leaves then fold in on themselves, ensnaring the insects until digestion is complete. The fruit is an inconspicuous capsule bearing several ellipsoid to oblong seeds.

The genus name *Drosera* is from the Greek *drosos*, meaning "dew" or "dewdrops." It and the common name "sundew" refer to the leaves' dewy-like secretions. Five species of *Drosera* are native to Florida. *D. capillaris* is the most common.

**Family:** Droseraceae (Sundew family)

**Native range:** Throughout peninsular Florida

To see where natural populations of Pink sundew have been vouchered, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).

**Hardiness:** Zones 8A–10B

**Lifespan:** Annual to short-lived perennial

**Soil:** Moist to wet, acidic sandy or peaty soils

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** ½–1" tall and 1–4" wide; flower stalk is 3–4" tall

**Propagation:** Seed

**Garden tips:** Pink sundew may be incorporated into naturalistic landscapes or restoration projects.

It requires constant moisture and cannot tolerate drought conditions.

Plants are occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a nursery in your area.



Photos by Mary Keim