

Narrowleaf yellowtops

(*Flaveria linearis*)

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

Narrowleaf yellowtops occur naturally in Florida's depression and basin marshes, wet prairies, pine rocklands, hydric hammocks, mangrove swamp and tidal marsh edges, and sand dunes, as well as in disturbed or ruderal areas. It typically blooms late summer through fall, but may bloom year-round. The small but prolific yellow flowers are especially attractive to bees, wasps, flower beetles and numerous butterflies, including the Cassius blue, Julia and many species of skippers.

Narrowleaf yellowtops' inflorescence is a showy corymb of bright yellow flowers that are somewhat flat-topped. Individual flowers are composed of several disk florets and a single ray floret. They are small but great in number. Leaves are linear, sessile and oppositely arranged. Leaf margins are typically entire but may be somewhat toothed. Branched stems are glabrous and may be reddish in color. Seeds are born in achenes.

The genus name *Flaveria* is from the Latin *flavens* (*flaveo*), meaning "gold" or "yellow," and alludes to the flower color. The species epithet *linearis* is Latin for "consisting of lines" or "linear," referring to the leaf shape.

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, daisy or composite family)

Native range: Most coastal peninsular counties from Levy and St. Johns south to the Keys; Taylor, Wakulla, Jefferson and Madison counties in the Panhandle

To see where natural populations of Narrowleaf yellowtops have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8A–11

Lifespan: Short-lived perennial

Soil: Moist to seasonally inundated, well-drained, nutrient-poor sandy, calcareous or mucky soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 2–3' tall, usually wider than tall

Propagation: Seed, division, cuttings

Garden tips: Narrowleaf yellowtops is a tough plant that has a high tolerance for stress. It does well in urban settings and areas where soil may be disturbed. It is highly drought, pest and salt tolerant (but not in frontline dunes). Because it grows low and wide, it does well in mixed plantings, as a tall groundcover and when planted en masse. However, the plant spreads via underground rhizomes and may not be suitable for small gardens. Once the plant has flowered, it may be trimmed to keep it looking fresh.

Seeds are available through the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative. Plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery in your area.



Photo by Mary Keim



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