

Black-eyed Susan

(*Rudbeckia hirta*)

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

Black-eyed Susan is a bright, cheerful wildflower found throughout Florida. Its compound flower head consists of many long yellow ray florets surrounding a core of dark purple to brown disk florets. Each solitary flowerhead is born on a rough, erect stem that emerges from a basal rosette of bristly leaves. Leaves along the stem are alternately arranged, with toothed margins and rough surfaces. Seeds are tiny black achenes. Depending on the conditions, black-eyed Susan can perform as a short-lived perennial, biennial or annual.



Black-eyed Susan typically blooms in spring through fall and occurs naturally in flatwoods, sandhills, open disturbed areas and along roadsides. It is pollinated by a variety of insects, and its seeds are eaten by seed-eating birds.

Family: Asteraceae (Aster or Composite family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

To see where natural populations of Black-eyed Susan have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8A–11

Soil: Rich, well-drained soils

Exposure: Full sun to minimal shade

Growth habit: 1–3' tall with 1–2' spread

Propagation: Seeds

Garden tips: Black-eyed Susans are easy to grow and maintain. They spread by way of abundant self-sown seed. They are adaptable to both dry and moist sites, but flower best with regular moisture. Depending on the conditions, they can perform as a short-lived perennial, biennial or annual. Black-eyed Susan is excellent for mixed wildflower gardens, and disturbed areas such as roadsides and medians.

Note: There are two forms of *Rudbeckia hirta* found naturally in Florida — *R. hirta* var. *angustifolia* in the northern third of the state, and *R. hirta* var. *floridana* in the central and southern part of Florida. Both forms are typically available from native nurseries and they usually sell the form most common to their latitude, however, when purchasing *R. hirta* for your landscape, be sure to ask which variety is being sold. Non-native varieties are not recommended. (Source: Craig Huegel)

Black-eyed Susan are often available from the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com. Plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.