

# Tropical sage

(*Salvia coccinea*)

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

Known by many names — Scarlet sage, Tropical sage, Red salvia, Blood sage — this versatile perennial wildflower is a steadfast addition to any wildflower garden. No pollinator can resist its bright red flowers, but it is particularly attractive to bees, large butterflies and hummingbirds. It typically blooms in summer and fall, but can bloom year-round in many parts of the state. It occurs naturally in hammocks, woodlands and disturbed sites.

Tropical sage's flower spike consists of many red, tubular blooms that are about 1" long. Flowers are loosely arranged in whorls and extend 90 degrees out from square, upright stems. Leaves are deltoid- to oval-shaped and have toothed margins and relatively long petioles. They are oppositely arranged. Seeds are born in capsules.

**Family:** Lamiaceae (Mint family)

**Native range:** Nearly throughout Florida

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

**Hardiness:** Zones 8–10

**Soil:** Well-drained, sandy to rich, moderately moist soils

**Exposure:** Full sun to minimal shade

**Growth habit:** 2–4'+ tall

**Propagation:** Seed, division, cuttings

**Garden tips:** Tropical sage is highly adaptable to a variety of conditions. Use it in a mixed wildflower bed or as an accent by itself. It is self-sowing and its seeds remain in the soil and will germinate throughout the year. It is drought tolerant.

Tropical sage is often available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit [PlantRealFlorida.org](http://PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich