

# Yellow necklacepod

(*Sophora tomentosa* var. *truncata*)

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

Yellow necklacepod is a long-lived flowering shrub that occurs naturally in coastal strands, hammocks and dunes throughout Central and South Florida. The flowers, which bloom year-round, attract butterflies, bees, hummingbirds and other small birds. The plant provides food and cover for a variety of wildlife.

Yellow necklacepod's bright yellow flowers are typical of pea family — irregularly shaped with a broad upper petal (banner) and two adjacent petals (wings) surrounding fused bottom petals that form a boat-like structure (keel). The flowers are born in long (6–12 inches) terminal racemes. Leaves are pinnately compound and alternately arranged. Leaflets, which number as many as 21 per leaf, are thick, ovate to elliptic and oppositely arranged. Young leaflets (as well



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as the trunk and stems) are slightly hairy and may become glabrous as they mature. Fruits are stalked pods up to 6 inches long with severe constrictions around each seed compartment, resembling a beaded necklace (hence the common name). Seeds are round, yellowish-brown and poisonous.

The genus name *Sophora* is from the Arabic *ṣufayrā*, meaning “yellow.” The species epithet *tomentosa* is from the Latin *tomentosus*, or “furry,” and refers to the hairs that cover most of the plant.

**Family:** Fabaceae (Legume, pea or bean family)

**Native range:** Coastal counties of Central and South Florida

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

**Hardiness:** Zones 9–11

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Moist to dry, well-drained sandy or calcareous soils

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** 4–10'+ tall with 4–8' spread

**Propagation:** Seed

**Garden tips:** Yellow necklacepod is a fast-growing, hardy plant with interesting foliage, flowers and seeds.

It does well as a single ornamental specimen or in quantities to form an attractive buffer planting. It is drought- and salt-tolerant, but cannot withstand freezing temperatures.

Caution: *Sophora tomentosa* var. *truncata* is often confused with the non-native *Sophora tomentosa* var. *occidentalis*, which is often sold in big box garden centers. The latter can be distinguished by the many fine hairs that cover it. The two species can cross-pollinate, so care should be taken to avoid the non-native variety. Both are known by the common name of Yellow necklacepod and both bear poisonous seeds.

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