

Rain lily

(*Zephyranthes atamasca*)

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

Rain lily is a short-lived perennial wildflower. Its showy, solitary flowers are white (although sometimes tinged with pink), and have bright yellow stamens and 6 distinct lobes that unite at the base to form a funnel. They are borne on leafless stalks. Leaves are basal, and linear or grasslike in shape. They arise in clumps.

As the common name suggests, rain lilies typically bloom after a rain shower. Flowering can occur in late winter through early summer, but their tendency to bloom around Easter has earned them another common name — Easter lily.

Rain lilies occur naturally in slope forests, moist flatwoods, river swamps and floodplains, shaded limestone outcrops, along roadsides and in ruderal areas. It is a threatened species in Florida.

Family: Amaryllidaceae (Amaryllis family)

Native range: Panhandle, north and central peninsula

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

Hardiness: Zones 7–10

Soil: Rich, acidic to slightly alkaline soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 6–18" tall with 1-2' spread

Propagation: Seed, division of bulbs

Garden tips: Although rain lilies prefer moist soils, they do not do well in soils that are constantly saturated. They can, however, withstand sustained drought. They are a very hardy species and are a great replacement for the many non-native lilies that are commonly sold in big box garden centers. They make for a nice mass planting, and also work well in lawns as they can be mowed. Rain lilies can be propagated by seed or division of bulbs.

Caution: All parts of this plant are poisonous if eaten.

Rain lilies are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery in your area.



Photo by Stacey Matrazzo



Rain lilies in bloom along SR267 in Leon County.
Photo by Eleanor Dietrich