

Water pimpernel

(*Samolus ebracteatus*)

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

Water pimpernel is a perennial wildflower found in wet pinelands and prairies, and along freshwater and brackish swamp, marsh and stream edges. It blooms throughout the year in Central and South Florida, and spring through fall in North Florida. Although the flowers self-pollinate, bees and butterflies are known to visit them. The plant is also known as Limewater brookweed due its preference of alkaline soil conditions.

Flowers are small (about 1/4-inch in diameter) and dainty, with five white or pink-tinged petals.

Anthers are yellow. Calyces are composed of five yellowish-green glabrous sepals. They are born in loose terminal clusters. Stems are reddish-purple, glabrous and nearly-leafless. They are unbranched and arise from a basal rosette of spatulate leaves. The leaves are grayish-green with red venation, entire margins and a succulent appearance. Stem leaves, when present, are obovate to oblong and alternately arranged. Fruit is a small, globular capsule.

Water pimpernel was formerly classified in the Theophrastaceae family. Some sources place the plant in the Samolaceae family. However, the APG III plant classification system does not recognize either, and places all genera formerly in the Theophrastaceae family now in the Primulaceae family.

The genus name *Samolus* is of debatable origin. Some sources suggest it is Celtic, others, Latin; but all agree it references a medicinal quality of some of its members, specifically to treat livestock. The species epithet *ebracteatus* means "without bracts."

Family: Primulaceae (Primrose family)

Native range: Coastal counties from Gulf to Monroe mainland on the west, and Volusia to the Keys on the east; also Hendry county

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

Hardiness: Zones 8B–11

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist to wet or inundated organic or calcareous soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 1–2' tall, taller than broad

Water pimpernel is not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see it.



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