

Water cowbane

(*Tiedemannia filiformis*)

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

In late summer and early fall, shallow freshwater wetlands across Florida burst to life with tall stands of Water cowbane. It is a larval host for the Eastern black swallowtail butterfly and the flowers attract a wide variety of pollinators.

Basal leaves are 2–3 feet long, terete, and form a dense basal rosette from which the flower stalks emerge and grow to 4–5 feet tall. A few reduced needle-like leaves also grow along the stem. Numerous small white flowers are arranged in compound umbels. The seed is born in a flattened, brown samara with wings along the entire edge. While evergreen in areas that lack deep freezes, it is relatively inconspicuous on the landscape when not in bloom.

There is a subspecies, *Tiedemannia filiformis* subsp. *greenmanii*, that is endemic to the Panhandle and considered state endangered.

Family: Apiaceae (Carrot, celery or parsley family)

Native range: Throughout Florida

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

Hardiness: Zones 8A–10B

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Wet organic muck

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: Herbaceous, erect up to 5 feet tall

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Water cowbane is perfect for a wetland butterfly garden.

Plants are occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.



Photos by Emily Bell