

Simmond's aster

(*Symphyotrichum simmondsii*)

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

Simmond's aster is endemic to the Southeastern Coastal Plain and while recorded from the Carolinas to Alabama, it is most prevalent throughout peninsular Florida. Occupying various habitats from moist to dry, it forms colonies via long underground rhizomes and typically blooms from October through January.



Photo by Emily Bell

Small flowers are composed of 18–38 pale lavender to lilac ray florets and 24–37 disk florets that turn reddish with maturity. Leaves are oblanceolate, scabrous and arranged alternately. Stems are rigid and range from sparsely scabrellous to glabrous.

Members of the *Symphyotrichum* genus were once classified in the genus *Aster*, which contained over 600 species. All have since been reclassified into 10 different genera. The genus name *Symphyotrichum* is from the Greek *sýmp̄h̄sis*, meaning “growing together,” and *thríx*, or “hair.” It refers to a basal ring of hairs or bristles (pappi) thought to occur on New England aster (*Aster novi-belgii*, now *Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*); however, this characteristic is absent in most modern *Symphyotrichum* species.

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, composite or daisy family)

Native range: Throughout the state

To see where natural populations of Simmond's aster have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist to dry calcareous soils

Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Growth habit: Herbaceous, up to 4 feet

Simmond's aster is not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see it.

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PLANT PROFILE:



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