

Florida milkweed

(*Asclepias feayi*)

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

Florida milkweed is a dainty endemic at home in the sandhills and scrubby flatwoods of central and south Florida. It emerges from winter dormancy in spring and typically blooms mid-summer. The species epithet *feayi* honors physician and botanist William T. Feay.



Photo by Kate Dolamore

A thin herbaceous stem bears few long slender opposite leaves. Terminal flower heads contain ten or fewer white flowers with a little purple in their upright coronas. Unlike most milkweeds, the five corollas are not reflexed, giving the flowers a star-like appearance.

Like all members of the *Asclepias* genus, Florida milkweed is a larval host plant for Monarch, Queen and Soldier butterflies. The plant contains a milky latex that is toxic to most animals, but Monarch, Queen and Soldier caterpillars are adapted to feed on them despite the chemical defense.

Family: Apocynaceae (Dogbane family)

Native range: Central to south Florida

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

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Well-drained sand

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: Up to 2 feet

Florida milkweed is not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see it.

