

# False rosemary

(*Conradina canescens*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_botanical\\_terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms).

False rosemary is a robust, evergreen flowering shrub that rewards gardeners with a display of fragrant flowers. It typically blooms from March through November, but can occur year-round. It occurs naturally in sand pine scrub and sandhills. Many pollinator species are attracted to False rosemary, but bees are its most prominent visitor.

Flowers are purplish-white and two-lipped: the lower lip is three-lobed and bears dark purple spots. Stamens are prominent and run along the inside of the upper lip. Sepals are fused and finely pubescent. Leaves are short and needle-like with a grayish- or silvery-green hue. They are oppositely arranged and grow densely from upright stems that branch from a main woody stem.

False rosemary plants may look like their namesake cousin, whose leaves are used as a savory cooking spice, but these members of the mint family emit a minty-fresh smell when their leaves are crushed

The species epithet *canescens* comes from the Latin *canescere*, meaning to turn white or gray. It refers to the fine, whitish hair covering the calyx, corolla and leaves.

There are only six species of *Conradina* worldwide; all are native to the United States and four are native to Florida. Some experts consider *Conradina brevifolia* to be its own species, but the Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants considers it a synonym of *Conradina canescens*.

**Family:** Lamiaceae (Mint family)

**Native range:** Western Panhandle (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Washington, Bay, Jackson, Gulf, Franklin and Wakulla counties) and Hernando, Polk and Highlands counties

*To see where natural populations of False rosemary have been vouchered, visit [florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).*

**Hardiness:** Zone 8A–9B

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Extremely dry, sandy soils

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** 2–3+’ tall

**Propagation:** Seed, cuttings

**Garden Tips:** False rosemary is drought tolerant, however, in the landscape setting, it may require additional water during extreme droughts. Otherwise, it is an extremely adaptable species that can make a nice addition to a home landscape.

False rosemary plants are often available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a nursery in your area.



Photo by Lisa Roberts