Spring-run spiderlily

(Hymenocallis rotata)

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

Photo by Damien Rockwood

Fall is a wonderful time to float down one of North Florida's beautifully clear spring-fed rivers, their shores resplendent with wildflowers! Among them, the Spring-run spiderlily (*Hymenocallis rotata*) stands out with its large white flowers rising out of the shallow water along spring run and river edges. The bright blooms are a beacon for their primary pollinator, Sphinx moths.

Spring-run spiderlilies have dark green, nearly erect strap-like leaves that arise directly from an onion-like bulb and grow to about three feet long. A single flowering scape grows to a similar height or a bit taller and typically bears two to four blooms. Flowers have a slender floral tube that is divided at the tip into six long narrow white tepals. Above the tepals sits a thin white membranous staminal cup that holds the bases of prominent long stamens, each with large noticeable anthers bearing yellow pollen.

The genus *Hymenocallis* is from the Greek *hymen*, meaning "membrane," and *callis*, meaning "beautiful." The species epithet *rotata* is Latin for "circular."

Florida is a diversity hotspot for the genus *Hymenocallis*. It is home to 13 of the 16 species native to the United States; eight of them are endemic to the state.

Family: Amaryllidaceae (Amaryllis family)
Native range: Eastern Panhandle and peninsular Florida south to Hillsborough and Orange counties
To see where natural populations of Spring-run spiderlily have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.
Lifespan: Perennial
Soil: Saturated sandy soils
Exposure: Full sun to part shade
Growth habit: up to 3 feet
Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central
Garden tips: Suitable for a naturalistic setting, the Spring-run spiderlily requires inundation and would do best in the shallow waters of a slow-moving stream.

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

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