

# Bearded grasspink

(*Calopogon barbatus*)

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

Bearded grasspinks are the earliest bloomers of Florida's four *Calopogon* species, generally starting in January and February. They occur in bogs, wet flatwoods, prairies and roadsides along with Pale grasspinks (*Calopogon pallidus*) and Tuberous grasspinks (*Calopogon tuberosus*), but can be distinguished by their earlier bloom time, smaller flowers and the curvature of their lower lateral petals, which are violin shaped.



Photo by Emily Bell

Bearded grasspink flowers form in a terminal inflorescence, with three to seven blooms. The petals can range from almost white to light pink to bright magenta. A labellum (lip-like petal) occurs on the top of each flower (not the bottom where it occurs in most genera) and bears a tuft of yellow stamen-like bristles. Stems are leafless, with only one or two slender grass-like basal leaves. Seeds are born in capsules.

The pollination process of the *Calopogon* genus is unique. The stamen-like bristles that form on the lip are designed to attract pollinators, but they offer no nectar or pollen. Instead, when a bee lands on the hairs, the lip swings down and loosely traps the bee, forcing it to crawl out across the reproductive parts. Pollen is then deposited on the bee; if the bee is already carrying pollen, it will make contact with the flower's stigma and (hopefully) pollinate the flower.

The genus name *Calopogon* is from the Greek *kalos*, or "beautiful," and *pogon*, or "beard." It refers to the tuft of hairlike structures on the flower's lip.

**Family:** Orchidaceae (Orchid family)

**Native range:** North and Central Florida, with scattered populations into both West and South Florida

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

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Acidic, sandy moist to wet soil

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** Up to 20 inches

Bearded grasspinks are not commercially available. Visit a natural area to see them.



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Florida Wildflower Foundation • P O Box 941691, Maitland, FL 32794-1691 • 407-622-1606 • [www.FlaWildflowers.org](http://www.FlaWildflowers.org)

