

St. Andrew's cross

(*Hypericum hypericoides*)

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

St. Andrew's cross is an evergreen perennial shrub found in wet pine flatwoods, calcareous hammocks, floodplain forests and mixed woodlands throughout Florida. Bees and butterflies love its flowers while the foliage provides cover for birds and other small wildlife.

St. Andrew's cross flowers are small (<1") and creamy yellow with four narrow petals arranged in an "X." They have many prominent yellow stamens. Flowers are borne in axils and have four unequal sepals. Leaves may be linear, elliptic or ovate. They are sessile and oppositely arranged. Stems are branched and reddish-brown. Fruits are ovoid capsules.

Some taxonomists place the *Hypericum* genus in the Clusiaceae family, of which they consider Hypericaceae to be a subfamily (Hypericoideae). The common name refers to St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, who is said to have been martyred by crucifixion on an x-shaped cross.

Family: Hypericaceae (St. John's wort family)

Native range: Nearly throughout

To see where natural populations of St. Andrew's cross have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Wet to moderately dry well-drained or calcareous soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 1–3'+ tall

Propagation: Seed

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: Although flowers are small and not as showy as other *Hypericum* species, its three-season (sometimes year-round) blooms, attractive evergreen foliage and high adaptability to a variety of conditions makes St. Andrew's cross a perfect addition to any home landscape.

St. Andrew's cross is occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.



Photo by Emily Bell

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