

# Elliott's lovegrass

(*Eragrostis elliottii*)

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

Elliott's lovegrass is a perennial bunchgrass that occurs naturally in flatwoods, scrub, prairies, pond and wetland edges, and disturbed sites throughout Florida. Its delicate little flowers appear in such abundance that they cover the plant in a billowy beige haze. It typically blooms in late summer through fall. Its seeds are tiny yet prolific, providing plenty of food for invertebrates and small birds, which use the dense foliage for cover, as well. The plant is a larval host for the Zabulon skipper.



Photo by Mary Keim

Elliott's lovegrass flowers are small, whitish beige and borne in wispy panicles. Leaves are long, linear and erect or arching with a silvery or bluish hue. Its fruits are dry, one-seeded caryopses, typical of grasses. Seeds may be dispersed by wind, gravity or on the fur of passing animals.

The genus name of *Eragrostis* comes from the Greek *eros*, or "love," and *agrostis*, meaning "grass" (hence the common name). The species epithet *elliottii* and common descriptor "Elliott's" honors American botanist Stephen Elliott (1771–1830).

**Family:** Poaceae (Grass family)

**Native range:** Throughout Florida

To see where natural populations of Elliott's lovegrass have been vouchered, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Moist to dry, well-drained sandy soils

**Exposure:** Full sun

**Growth habit:** 1–2' tall with a broader spread

**Propagation:** Seed, division

**Florida regions of landscape suitability:** North, Central, South

**Garden tips:** Elliott's lovegrass can tolerate a variety of conditions. It does well in nutrient-poor soils, is drought-tolerant and can handle limited inundation. Its clump-forming habit makes it a great choice for a mass or border planting or as a groundcover, particularly because its foliage remains attractive all year. The plant is also helpful in controlling erosion.

**Caution:** A South African cultivar, Wind dancer lovegrass, is often sold, as is the nonnative Weeping lovegrass (*E. curvula*), also from South Africa. Be sure you are purchasing the native species by sourcing from local growers.

Elliott's lovegrass is available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a native nursery in your area. Seeds may be available through the Florida Wildflower Growers Cooperative at [www.FloridaWildflowers.com](http://www.FloridaWildflowers.com).

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