

# Tall ironweed

(*Vernonia angustifolia*)

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

Tall ironweed is a beautiful summer-blooming wildflower that occurs naturally in dry habitats such as sandhills, open woodlands, pine flatwoods and roadsides. Its vibrant magenta blooms attract butterflies, bees and hummingbirds.

Tall ironweed is also commonly called Narrow-leaf ironweed for its long, linear leaves, which range from 3 to 6 inches in length. They are dark green, alternately arranged and have a rough feel. The deep purple flowers are arranged in corymbs, with each flowerhead consisting of up to 30 tubular disk florets. Seeds are born in cypselae, each topped with a conspicuous pappus.

The genus *Vernonia* is named for British botanist William Vernon, who collected and documented plants in the Mid-Atlantic United States during the late 1600s. The species epithet *angustifolia* comes from the Latin *angustus*, meaning "narrow," and *folia*, meaning "leaf."

**Family:** Asteraceae (Aster, composite or daisy family)

**Native range:** Panhandle and peninsula south to Highlands County

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

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Dry, well-drained sandy soil

**Exposure:** Full sun to part shade

**Growth habit:** Up to 3-4 feet tall

**Propagation:** Seed

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

**Garden tips:** Tall ironweed is drought resistant and makes an excellent addition to a mixed wildflower meadow or as a back border in a native plant garden.

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



Photo by Mary Keim

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