

Feay's prairieclover

(*Dalea feayi*)

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

Feay's prairieclover is a low-growing shrub with a distinct rounded growth habit. It grows naturally in sandhills and scrubby habitats. In late spring through early fall, the plant may be covered in hundreds of fluffy pink flower balls. These delightful blooms attract a variety of pollinators, especially native bees. Butterflies are not known to frequent the flowers, but the plant is a larval host for the Southern dogface. The seeds are eaten by birds and other wildlife. Near-endemic, the plant occurs outside of Florida in only a few Georgia counties.



Photo by Mary Keim

Feay's prairieclover's orb-like inflorescences are terminal spikes composed of 20 or more tiny pink flowers. Each flower bears five stamens, some with noticeable yellow anthers. Calyces are five-lobed. Leaves are odd-pinnately compound with three to nine narrow glandular leaflets. Stems are woody and branched. Seeds are born in reddish-brown flattened legumes.

The genus name *Dalea* is an homage to English physician and naturalist Samuel Dale (1659–1739). The species epithet *feayi* honors American botanist William Feay (1803–1879).

Family: Fabaceae (Legume, bean or pea family)

Native range: Central and southern peninsula, Wakulla and Franklin counties

To see where natural populations of Feay's prairieclover have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Dry, well-drained, sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun

Growth habit: 12–24" tall, equally wide

Propagation: Seed (may require scarification)

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: The unique mound-like form, attractive fern-like foliage and dazzling floral display of Feay's prairieclover provide year-round interest in the landscape. Provided it is planted in full sun with good drainage, the plant is relatively easy to grow and maintain. Once established, it requires minimal care other than light pruning to keep it looking fresh.

Feay's prairieclover plants are occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.

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