

Summer farewell

(*Dalea pinnata*)

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

Summer farewell is a perennial herbaceous wildflower native to sandhills, dry flatwoods and scrub habitat. Flowers are borne in terminal heads. Flower buds are concealed by red ovate bracts. Each bud opens to reveal up to 30 white to pinkish-white flowers. Leaves are pinnately compound and alternately arranged. Leaflets are small, needle-like and bright green. Stems are reddish. Seed pods are hairy and appear silvery gray.



Photo by Mary Keim

As the common name implies, summer farewell blooms in late summer and early fall. It attracts many pollinators, particularly bees. Seed pods provide food for birds and other small animals. Summer farewell is a larval host for the Southern dogface butterfly.

Members of the *Dalea* genus are commonly known as prairie clover. The genus was named after Samuel Dale, a British apothecary and botanist. The species epithet, *pinnata*, refers to the plant's pinnate leaves.

Family: Fabaceae (Legume, pea or bean family)

Native range: Panhandle, north and central Peninsula, Martin County

To see where natural populations of Summer farewell have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Dry, well-drained sandy soil

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 2-3' tall

Propagation: Seed

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central

Garden tips: Summer farewell makes an excellent addition to a dry, sunny wildflower garden.

It is dormant in the winter, but its spring leaves, summer and fall flowers, and fall seed pods provide plenty of color throughout the rest of the year. Be sure to plant in groups of 4-5 plants; otherwise the plant may get lost in a mixed planting.

Although not commonly cultivated, Summer farewell is occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area. Seeds may be available from the Florida Wildflower Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com.

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