

# Alligatorlily

(*Hymenocallis palmeri*)

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

Alligatorlily is a perennial wildflower endemic to cypress swamps, marshes, wet prairies, savannas and moist open flatwoods in Florida's central and southern peninsula. It also occurs in Duval and Bradford counties and is sometimes found in roadside ditches. Its striking white flowers are primarily pollinated by Sphinx moths.



Photo by Mary Keim

Alligatorlily's fragrant flowers are solitary and terminal. They have three linear petals and three petal-like sepals, all of which radiate from beneath a thin, white, funnel-shaped corona. The corona is marked by faintly toothed margins and a greenish "eye" in its center. Leaves are basal, linear or straplike and can grow up to 16 inches in length. Stamens are long and prominent with large noticeable anthers. Seeds are green, egg-shaped and relatively large (up to 3/4-inch in diameter).

The genus *Hymenocallis* is from the Greek *hymen*, meaning "membrane," and *callis*, meaning "beautiful." The species epithet *palmeri* honors British botanist Edward Palmer.

**Family:** Amaryllidaceae (Amaryllis family)

**Native range:** Central and southern peninsula, Bradford and Duval counties

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

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Moist to saturated sandy or mucky soils

**Exposure:** Full sun to partial shade

**Growth habit:** 2'+ tall

**Propagation:** Seed

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

**Garden tips:** Alligatorlily works well in naturalistic settings with moist to wet conditions, such as a pond edge restoration. It is neither salt nor drought tolerant.

Alligatorlily is occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a nursery in your area.

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