

Alligatorflag

(*Thalia geniculata*)

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

Alligatorflag (also known as fireflag) is a tall, sturdy herbaceous perennial. Compared to the overall size of the plant, its blooms are somewhat inconspicuous. Flowers are purplish to whitish, 3-petaled and often nodding. Leaves are large (3'+ long), broadly lanceolate with long petioles and pointed tips. They emerge from the base of the plant. Flower stalks extend well beyond leaves.



Photo by Emily Bell

Alligatorflag typically blooms summer through fall. It occurs naturally in wetland depressions and cypress sloughs, and along the edges of marshes, swamps and wet ditches.

Alligatorflag is the host plant for the Brazilian skipper (*Calpododes ethlius*). It also provides cover for nesting water birds.

Family: Marantaceae (Arrowroot family)

Native range: Most of peninsula; Gulf, Franklin, Wakulla and Gadsden counties

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

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Wet, rich, acidic soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: up to 9' tall

Propagation: Seed, rhizomes

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: Alligatorflag is best used in wetland restorations or to enhance retention pond edges. It does well in very wet conditions, including standing water. Note that it dies back in winter.

Alligatorflag is often available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.

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