

Glade lobelia

(*Lobelia glandulosa*)

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

Glade lobelia is a charming perennial wildflower found in wet prairies, marshes, swamps and wet pinelands throughout Florida where it attracts hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. It is largely unnoticed in the wild until it flowers.

In spring, the plant emerges as a basal rosette of linear to lanceolate leaves. By summer, the flower stalk appears. Flowers are borne on erect spikes. They open in late summer and fall (year-round in South Florida), and vary in color from lavender to blue to violet. Each flower is two-“lipped.” The upper lip has two fused petals and is reflexed; the lower lip has three fused petals with a fine pubescence that extends into the throat. Stem leaves are alternately arranged, with leaf margins bearing many fine, gland-tipped teeth. Seeds are born in inconspicuous capsules.



Photo by Alan Cressler

The genus *Lobelia* is named for Matthias de Lobel (1538-1616), a Flemish physician, botanist and author of a landmark botany textbook. The species epithet *glandulosa* is from the Latin for “having kernels or glands,” and refers to the gland-tipped teeth on the leaf margins.

Family: Campanulaceae (Bellflower family)

Native range: Nearly throughout

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

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist to wet, well-drained to poorly drained or limestone soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 2–4' tall

Propagation: Seed

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: Glade lobelia is best suited for wildflower gardens, naturalistic landscapes and habitat restorations. It will die back in the winter and may require annual pruning of old flowering stems. It is neither salt- nor drought-tolerant.

Glade lobelia is 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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