

# Wildflower Facts

- The definition of a Florida native plant is a plant species whose natural range included Florida prior to European contact (about 1500 AD), according to the best available scientific and historical documentation.
- A naturalized plant is a non-native species that escaped into the wild. That has grown and reproduced on its own outside of cultivation without human assistance.
- Florida has approximately 2,600 native species and an additional 1,000 naturalized species. That is over 3,600 plants created by God, the supreme "Master Gardener", to live and thrive in our climate.
- There is no point in Florida that is farther than 70 miles from warm marine waters. Consequently we have moist, humid air that combines with our Florida heat. Many species of **wildflowers** from other states cannot tolerate our climate demands.
- Why are wildflowers and native plants so important? Because droughts, hurricanes, sandy soils, wet soils, floods, cold snaps, and salty sea breezes are all a part of Florida weather. Native plants have existed in Florida for thousands of years and have adapted to our climate, soils and wildlife.
- By using the right wildflowers and native plants you can greatly reduce the need to irrigate and fertilize. By planting a diverse assortment of native species you'll support the balance of nature and reduce the need for using insecticides.
- Almost every environmental challenge you may encounter has been solved in nature with the right set of native plants.
- Why do we hybridize and try to change our **plants**??? Because often the natives do not flower as profusely as some of their hybridized cousins, their flowers may not have as many petals and they may not be as compact and bushy. On the "up" side they require so little of us to thrive. Our vital pollinators often prefer them because many times the natives have more nectar. Many butterfly species will pick natives over exotics,
- More and more of our "greenspace" is consumed as our population skyrockets. Wild animals, birds, bees and butterflies are being squeezed out of the habitat that they need for survival.
- When we alter the landscape for development we remove the natural resources on which all of our lives, and lifestyles, depend.
- There is an ever increasing need for us to manage not only the existing forests and large **landholdings** but also the suburban lot, subdivisions, schools, parks, roadsides and highways.
- A unique collection of Florida native plants sustain each of our natural areas, including beach dunes, **pinelands**, scrubs, sandhills, hardwood hammocks and marshes. These natural areas provide us with clean air, drinking water, flood protection, stable soils recreation areas and natural beauty.
- There are **418** endangered plant species and 104 are endemic to Florida. Endemic means they occur nowhere else in the world. We need to protect our valuable native flora for our future generations to enjoy.
- The Florida Natural Areas Inventory has a publication out that identifies the endangered and rare plants that need our protection, "Field Guide To The Rare Plants Of Florida"