

Habitat Avengers

Featured Native Plant: *Sisyrinchium* (Blue-eyed Grass)

There are so many attractive native plant species suitable for ornamental purposes while also providing resources for wildlife. Several can be found in the genus *Sisyrinchium*...

Plants in the genus *Sisyrinchium* are commonly known as Blue-eyed Grass. This dainty wildflower has grass-like leaves but belongs to the iris family.

Blue-eyed Grass species native to South Carolina include *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* (narrowleaf blue-eyed grass), *Sisyrinchium atlanticum* (eastern blue-eyed grass), *Sisyrinchium fuscatum* (Coastal Plain blue-eyed grass), as well as the less common *Sisyrinchium mucronatum* (needletip blue-eyed grass), the white flowered *Sisyrinchium albidum* (white blue-eyed grass), and the yellow flowered *Sisyrinchium rosulatum* (annual blue-eyed grass).



Sisyrinchium species are clump-forming perennials that feature a tuft of narrow leaves typically growing to 12" tall. Violet-blue flowers (most commercially available species), each with 6 pointed tepals and a yellow eye, bloom in spring on stalks from flattened stems. Evergreen foliage makes this a great plant for borders. Flowers persist throughout the spring and summer. *Sisyrinchium* will typically grow in sun or shade and moist or dry sites.

Sisyrinchium flowers provide an important early spring and summer nectar

source for pollinators as well as good cover for small wildlife. Beneficial sweat bees, bumble bees, bee flies, and Syrphid flies are attracted to *Sisyrinchium* nectar and pollen. Cardinals, song sparrows, wild turkeys, and northern bobwhite among other birds eat the seed. *Sisyrinchium* species grow well in rock gardens and are deer resistant. Clumps are easy to divide and transplant.



Information from: <http://herbarium.biol.sc.edu/herb/s.htm>
http://tmousecmouse.blogspot.com/2012_04_01_archive.html, <http://www.wildflower.org/>
http://www.ncwildflower.org/plant_galleries/details/sisyrinchium-angustifolium

See also: <http://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/> and <http://www.se-eppc.org/>

