



8–24 in

Nectar



Photo by Ron and Diane Bynum

Tampa verbena

Three native verbena species occur in Florida. Two of them — Beach verbena (*Glandularia maritima*) and Tampa verbena (*G. tampensis*) — are state-listed as endemic and endangered. Both are attractive and work well in landscapes.

Description

Tampa verbena occurs on the east and west coasts of peninsular Florida, from Lee to Levy counties on the west side and from Volusia to Indian River counties on the east. Beach verbena is found mostly on the east coast — from St. Johns to Monroe counties — but also has been documented in Levy County on the west coast.

Verbena produces clusters of deep pink to lavender flowers year-round, although the most prolific flowering occurs in spring and summer. Its flowers — along with its adaptable nature and attractive dark-green, diamond-shaped leaves — have earned it a place in many gardens. Both species are short-lived evergreen



Photo by Melanie Long

Zebra longwing on Tampa verbena



Photo by Andrea England

Beach verbena

perennials, lasting up to three years. Tampa verbena reaches up to 2 feet in height with a spread of 3 to 4 feet. Beach verbena is a low-growing, sprawling plant with a maximum height of 8 inches and a spread of 2 feet or more when mature.

Butterflies and bees

Verbena is a good nectar source for a variety of butterflies and moths, including Gulf fritillaries, hawkmoths and Long-tailed skippers. It is also attractive to miner bees and long-tongued bees such as bumble and orchid bees.

Planting

Use verbena as a low groundcover in a bed, on a woodland edge, or in a container or above-ground planter. It is particularly striking when used in masses. Plants should be spaced from 3 to 4 feet apart to allow for their spread. They may be planted anytime between February and December.

Seeds

Seeds of these species are not usually available commercially. Verbena does not reseed readily in landscapes.

Plants

Plants are available at native nurseries and some mainstream retail nurseries.

Care

Verbena is relatively free of pests and disease, provided it isn't watered too much. Light pruning may be necessary in

more formal settings; otherwise, plants are maintenance-free.

Site conditions

Beach verbena adapts to a variety of acidic and alkaline soils, including clay, loam and sand. Try it in dry, low-nutrient soils where other plants have trouble growing; do not over-irrigate it. Plant in full sun. Because it's found in coastal communities, its salt and drought tolerance is high.

Tampa verbena prefers more moisture and can adapt to full sun and partial shade. It does well in a container, provided it receives sufficient sun and is watered often.

Verbena can sustain freeze damage in northern counties.

Hardiness zones

Beach verbena is best suited for zones 8B–11, while Tampa verbena is better for zones 9A–10B.



Photo by Egan Urban

Tampa verbena

There are many non-native verbenas available. Be sure to ask your nursery or supplier for native species.

CAUTION

Verbena species may hybridize, so it is important to plant the species found naturally in your area to help preserve the distinct genetic identities and ecological roles of these plants.