

Atlantic St. John's wort

(*Hypericum tenuifolium*)

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

St. John's wort is an evergreen shrub known for its outstanding ornamental features. Thirty-four species are found in Florida. All are native, and several are on state and federal endangered plant lists. Atlantic St. John's wort is the most typical species encountered at native plant nurseries and plant sales. It occurs naturally in scrub, pine flatwoods, sandhills and coastal swales. Its many golden flowers bloom in the summer, attracting a host of native bees and other pollinators.



Photo by Mary Keim

Atlantic St. John's wort has small (less than 1 inch in diameter) bright yellow flowers with five petals, five sepals, and many obvious yellow-orange stamens. Leaves are dark green, needlelike and typically less than ½ inch long. They are sessile and oppositely arranged. Stems are reddish brown and sturdy. Seeds are born in capsules. The shrub has a delightful mounding and spreading shape.

The species epithet *tenuifolium* is from the Latin *tenuis*, or "thin," and *folius*, or "leaf."

Family: Hypericaceae (St. John's wort family)

Native range: Peninsula, central and western Panhandle

To see where natural populations of Atlantic St. John's wort have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 8A–10B

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Well-drained sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 1–1½' tall with 2'+ spread

Propagation: Seed

Garden tips: Atlantic St. John's wort can be used as a foundation plant, along a border or edge, or in a mass planting. It can adapt to a variety of soils, including clay and loam, as well as acidic and lightly alkaline soils. Plants are not salt tolerant and are moderately drought tolerant once established.

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



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