

REDEFINING PERENNIALS FOR USE IN FLORIDA

PAUL KROLL AND DIANNE TURNER

American Farms
P.O. Box 990027
Naples, FL 33399-6060

Additional index words. Ornamentals, landscape.

Abstract. Perennial use in the landscape has been on the increase in Florida in recent years. However, northern perennials which typically grow and flower in the spring and summer followed by a dormancy period, are often ill-suited for use in southern Florida. American Farms has attempted to identify "Florida Friendly" perennials which can withstand the heat, humidity and rainfall patterns during the summer or the mild,

drier, short days of winter. Perennials have been selected for attributes which allow for vitality and beauty in the landscape.

American Farms, well-known as a producer of annual bedding plants, has recently expanded and enhanced its wholesale inventory to include "Florida Friendly" perennials which can withstand the unique seasonal weather conditions in south Florida, USDA zone 10. The search for reliable perennials included the attributes of landscape performance, uniqueness in color, unusual plant architecture, versatility of use, suitability for wildlife and pest resistance/tolerance. Table 1 is a synopsis of those perennials identified as appropriate for use in south Florida along with pertinent information on flower color, plant architecture, culture, best season for use and container planting options.

Table 1. Perennials for use in south Florida.

Botanical Name Common Name	Flowering Season	Flower Color and Cultural Information
Angelonia	year round	Fragrant, pink, blue, blue & white, white flowers. Butterfly nectar plant. Full sun to partial shade, keep moist but well-drained. Prune back to maintain compact shape. Frost tender. Tolerates Florida summer rain and heat.
<i>Asclepias</i> Milkweed	year round	Brilliant yellow/orange blooms in terminal clusters. Excellent in the perennia border where it can be left alone to flourish. No serious pests and division is not necessary. Will grow well in most soils. Flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
Butterfly Flower <i>Barleria</i>	fall through spring	Compact semi-woody shrub with trumpet-shaped violet flowers. No serious pests and will tolerate most soils. Full sun or partial shade. Frost tender.
Philippine Violet <i>Brachycome</i>	fall through spring	Full sun to partial shade, drought tolerant. Prune to maintain vigorous growth. Neat, mounding habit. Lavender, yellow & pink daisy-like blooms. Trailing dark green foliage. Good in baskets or mixed plantings. Effective border plant. Intolerant of Florida Summers.
Swan River Daisy <i>Buddleia</i>	spring through fall	A beautiful plant with a compact arching growth habit and gray-green to blue-green foliage. Delightfully fragrant flowers are borne on 4"-10" long panicles, attracting butterflies by the masses. Easily grown plant for the shrub or perennial border.
Butterfly Bush <i>Canna</i>	spring through fall	Large, bold leaves may be green to bronze-red, emerging in spring from tuberous roots. Flowers bloom on tall stalks above the foliage. Flowers in shades of red, yellow, pink and orange, some varieties with contrasting spots. Excellent planted in large masses alone or with other plants. Perfect background to lower growing annuals and perennials. Leaf rollers can be a problem.
Indian Shot <i>Coreopsis</i>	spring through fall	A profusion of golden yellow flowers bloom on tall stems above the foliage. in full sun, will tolerate most soil conditions. Most commercially available cultivars will not survive summers in south Florida.
<i>Cuphea</i> Plant Tickseed	late summer through spring	Upright perennial with interesting tubular-shaped flowers. The blooms are orange/yellow and a favorite of hummingbirds. Superb heat and drought tolerance. Prune to maintain compact habit.
Candy Corn <i>Curcuma</i>	all summer	Several cultivars are now commercially available with a variety of colors and habits. Prefers full sun to partial shade and moist soil conditions. Very tolerant of Florida summers. Reflowers after winter dormancy.
Thailand Tulip <i>Euryops</i>	year round	Herbaceous shrub covered with daisy-like flowers. Likes full sun and will tolerate most soil conditions. Will survive Florida summers but with reduced flowering.
Bush Daisy <i>Gaillardia</i>	spring through fall	The large flowers have a large bristly center surrounded by bright yellow or red rays. Flowers are excellent for cutting. Good in the perennial border combined with silver-foliaged or blue or yellow-flowering plants. Especially attractive in rock gardens and naturalized settings. Requires little water once established.
Blanket Flower <i>Gloxinia sylvatica</i>	late fall through early spring	Unique tubular scarlet flowers atop dark green glossy foliage. Full sun to partial shade. Prefers well drained, fertile soils. May be invasive in south Florida when not controlled by cold conditions.
Bolivian Sunset <i>Ipomoea</i>		Unusual ground cover with trailing habit. Survives most light conditions and soil types. Great cascading over walls and banks. Tolerates summer rain and heat. Potential invasive in south Florida.
Sweet Potato Vine <i>Jacobinia</i>	summer through fall	Exotic looking cluster of pink flowers. Requires full sun to partial shade and prefers moist, well-drained soil. Frost tender.
Shrimp Plant <i>Justicia</i>	summer through fall	Bright red spikes of tubular flowers that are highly attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds. Likes full sun to partial shade and moist, but well-drained, soil conditions.
Firespike <i>Lantana</i>	spring through fall	Easily grown perennial requiring little maintenance when established. Its beautiful flowers attract scores of butterflies and moths. Blooms are available in a wide range of colors from orange and yellow to pink and purple, often more than one color appears on the plant. Perfect border or edging, growing well in intense heat and average to poor soil. Also great in hanging baskets and patio containers where the plant may cascade over the side.
<i>Liatris</i> Blazing Star	spring through summer	Low maintenance, long-lasting perennial. Spikes of lavender blooms over thin grassy leaves. Plant in full sun. Tolerates dry soils when established. Attractive in wildflower gardens, and long-lasting as cut flowers. Also attracts bees and butterflies.

Table 1. (Continued) Perennials for use in south Florida.

Botanical Name Common Name	Flowering Season	Flower Color and Cultural Information
<i>Orthosiphon</i> Cat Whiskers	summer through fall	Tall spikes of lavender or white flowers. Excellent background plant for full-sun to partial shade. Prefers moist, well-drained soils. Prune to maintain compact habit. Frost tender. Attractive to butterflies.
<i>Osteospermum</i> African Daisy	late winter through spring	Daisy-like flowers in shades of pink, purple, and white. Prefers full sun and tolerates most soil types. Cold and drought tolerant. Increased flowering during cooler temperatures. Attractive to butterflies.
<i>Oxalis</i> Shamrock	spring through summer	Small, single white flowers with beautiful purple clover-like foliage. Tolerates full sun to heavy shade. Excellent as edging or perennial border, very easy to grow. Dormant in winter, resprouting in the spring.
<i>Pentas</i> Star Flower	year round	Heat tolerant tropical sub-shrub, grown as an annual where freezes occur. Pentas are great background plants for sun-loving, lower growing annuals and perennials. Extremely attractive to butterflies. Drought tolerant once established. Few pest problems.
<i>Rudbeckia</i> Black-Eyed Susan	spring through fall	Nice accent plant. Good for cutting gardens. Are impressive when massed in background plantings, especially in naturalized gardens with ornamental grasses. Drought tolerant. Most cultivars will not survive south Florida summers.
<i>Ruellia</i> Summer Petunia Mexican Petunia	spring through fall	Lavender or pink petunia-like blooms. Useful in the flower bed or border, but it needs to be contained by a walk or edging as it is invasive. Prefers full sun, is drought tolerant once established.
<i>Russellia</i>	spring through fall	Tubular red flowers borne in large sprays on light green wispy foliage. Prefers Firecracker Plant full sun or partial shade. Very drought tolerant once established. Frost tender.
<i>Salvia greggii</i> Autumn Sage	year round	Masses of small flowers in red, white, salmon, or pink. Prefers full sun and most soils. Tolerant to heat and drought. Will not tolerate south Florida summers.
<i>Scaevola</i> Blue Fan Flower	spring through fall	Excellent low-growing ground cover. Prefers full sun to partial shade and fertile soil conditions. Useful in containers and baskets. Frost tender.
<i>Scutellaria</i> Purple Fountain	year round	Purple or rose colored flower spikes attractive to butterflies atop low-growing ground cover. Prefers full sun and moist, well-drained soil. Frost tender.
<i>Stachytarpheta</i> Porterweed	spring through fall	Pink or purple flowers attractive to butterflies. Prefers full sun. Drought tolerant once established. Salt tolerant. Prune back to maintain compact shape.
<i>Turnera</i> Buttercup	spring through fall	Single-day blooming yellow flowers attractive to butterflies. Dark green foliage. Prune to maintain shape. Drought tolerant once established. Prefers full sun, will tolerate most soil conditions.
<i>Verbena</i>	spring through fall	Cultivar 'Tapien'. Heat tolerant perennial grown for their dependable bloom. Prefers full sun for optimum flowering. Drought tolerant once established. Excellent flowering ground cover or border edging and perfect for containers.

Proc. Fla. State Hort. Soc. 110:363-365. 1997.

GERMINATION AND GROWTH OF SEVEN PERENNIAL SPECIES IN SOUTH FLORIDA

SALLIE A. SLORA¹ AND KIMBERLY A. KLOCK
University of Florida, IFAS
Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center
3205 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

Additional index words. Natural wild seed populations, purple coneflower, blanket flower, Mexican hat, prairie bergamot, black-eyed Susan, lamb's ear, yellow coneflower.

Abstract. The objectives of this study were to determine percent germination and to monitor growth and flowering, in a southern Florida environment, of seven natural populations of perennial seeds that had been collected from an Illinois prairie.

Varieties examined were *Gaillardia* × *grandiflora* (blanket flower), *Echinaceae purpurea* (purple coneflower), *Ratibda col-umnifera* (Mexican hat), *Ratibida pinnata* (yellow coneflower), *Rudbeckia hirta* (black-eyed Susan), *Stachys byzantina* (lamb's ear) and *Monarda fistulosa* (prairie bergamot). Two germination tests were conducted: 1) percent germination after 7 days in Metro Mix 500 (MM500); and 2) daily percent germination for 7 days in petri dishes lined with filter paper. All species, except black-eyed Susan, had less than 10% germination in MM500 as compared to germination in petri dishes. Germination percentages after 7 days in petri dishes were similar to percentages measured in MM500 for blanket flower, Mexican hat, yellow coneflower, and prairie bergamot. However, germination of purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan and lamb's ear were significantly greater in petri dishes than in MM500. All species grew well except for lamb's ear, that began to decline in June 1997. Only Mexican hat, black-eyed Susan and purple coneflower flowered.

Herbaceous perennials are plants with soft, succulent shoot growth that live for 2 or more years and flower annually.

¹This study was performed as part of the requirements of ORH 4905, Independent Study in Environmental Horticulture by the senior author. Mention of any trade names does not constitute an endorsement. Florida Agriculture Experiment Station Journal Series No. N-01451.