

Glossary

Need help identifying native plants? Here is a few definitions to help you from the [Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida](#) by Richard P. Wunderlin

A

Acaulescent. Without a leafy stem; leaves all clustered in a basal rosette.

Acicular. Slender and pointed; needle-shaped.

Acuminate. Tapering gradually to a slender pointed apex, the sides of the taper slightly concave.

Alternate. Leaves situated one at a node. Also stamens alternate with petals.

Apex. The tip.

Armed. Having thorns, spines, or prickles.

B

Bearded. Having a tuft, line, or ring of stiff **trichomes**—a hairlike outgrowth from the epidermis.

Bifurcate. Two-forked

Bipinnate. Compound leaves divided into segments with each segment again divided into segments.

Bristle. A stiff, strong, but slender trichome.

C

Calyx. The outermost series of the perianth parts of a flower, composed of the sepals.

Campanulate. Bell-shaped.

Capillary. Hairlike.

Carpel. The ovule bearing unit of the flower.

Caudate. With a tail-like appendage.

Celia. Marginal trichomes.

Compound. A leaf with two or more leaflets; an ovary with two or more joined carpels.

Conic. Coned-shaped.

Cordate. Heart-shaped, with rounded lobes and a sinus at the base.

Cotyledon. The primary leaf.

Crenate. Toothed with shallow, rounded teeth, scalloped.

Cyme. A broad, flat inflorescence in which the ventral flower matures first.

D

Deciduous. Falling off at the end of the growing season.

Dehiscent. Opening regularly by valves, slits at maturity.

Dentate. With sharp-pointed teeth, tips pointing outward.

Digitate. Palmately compound.

Dioecious. Having male and female reproductive structures on different individuals as opposed to monoecious.

Distichous. Arranged in two ranks, producing leaves or flowers on opposite sides of the stem in the same plane.

E

Ebracteate. Without bracts.

Eciliate. Without celia.

Emarginate. Having a shallow notch at the apex.

Entire. A margin without teeth, lobes, or divisions.
Epiphytic. Growing on another plant, but not deriving nutrition from it as opposed to parasitic.
Erose. With an irregularly eroded or jagged margin.
Evergreen. Retaining green leaves in the dormant season
Exfoliating. Peeling off in layers.

F

Falcate. Sickle-shaped.
Farina. The mealy coating on a surface.
Fascicle. A small close bundle or cluster.
Filament. The stalk of the stamen.
Filiform. Threadlike.
Fimbriate. Unevenly fringed with slender projections along the margin.
Flabellate. Fan-shaped.
Flexuous. Having a zig-zag form.
Floriferous. Having flowers
Fruit. A ripened ovary, together with any other structures that ripen with it and form a unit with it.
Funnelform. Shaped like a funnel
Fusiform. Spindle-shaped, swollen in the middle and tapering toward both ends.

G

Gemmiparous. Producing small, vegetative buds that detach and grow into a new plant.
Glabrate. Nearly glabrous
Glabrous. Without trichomes (Hairlike growth) or glands
Gland. An area on the surface of an organ or end of the trichome which secretes or contains fluid.
Glaucous. Covered with a fine, waxy, whitish or bluish coating that rubs off easily.
Glomerate. In dense clusters or heads.
Glutinous. Covered with a sticky secretion.
Granular. With a surface appearing as if covered with minute grainlike particles.

H

Hastate. Shaped like an arrowhead.
Herbaceous. Lacking persistent woody parts.
Hirsute. Having coarse, stiff trichomes.
Hyaline. Thin and translucent or transparent.

I

Imbricate. Overlapping
Incised. Deeply, sharply, and irregularly cut.
Indumentum. The trichomes collectively.
Induplicate. With the margins folded or rolled inward.
Indurate. Hardened.
Inflated. Bladder-like.
Inflorescence. The arrangement of the flowers on an axis
Internode. The part of the stem between two nodes.
Involucre. A series of bracts surrounding a single or cluster of flowers.

K

Keel. A sharp or conspicuous, longitudinal, dorsal ridge; the two, often united, lower petals of a papilionaceous Fabaceae (Pea Family) flower.

L

Lacerate. Torn, or with an irregularly jagged margin.

Lacinate. Divided into narrow, pointed segments

Lanceolate. Lance-shaped, longer than wide, widest near the base and gradually tapering to the apex.

Leaflet. An ultimate unit of a compound leaf.

Lenticel. A slightly raised, corky area on the stem and branches of woody plants.

Locule. The cavity in an ovary or fruit.

Lunate. Crescent-shaped.

Lustrous. Shining.

M

Mealy. Covered with fine granules.

Membranaceous. Having a texture that is thin/flexible.

Midrib, midvein. The main or central vein.

Monoecious. A plant with unisexual flowers on the same individual.

Monadrous. Having a single stamen.

Monomorphic. Having a single form.

Muricate. With minute, spiny projections.

N

Nectar. A sugar or protein rich secretion which serves as an attractant and food source for animals.

Nectary. An organ or tissue that secretes nectar.

Node. The place on a stem where a leaf or branch is attached.

Nodose. Knobby.

O

Obcordate. Inverse heart-shaped, deeply lobed at apex and tapering to the base.

Oblanceolate. Inverse lance-shaped, broadest at apex and gradually tapering to base.

Oblique. Slanting; unequal sided.

Obovate. Inverse egg-shaped in outline.

Obsolete. Not apparent, rudimentary.

Operculum. A little lid.

Opposite. Situated directly across from each other at the same node or level.

Ovary. The ovule-bearing part of a carpel which become the fruit.

Ovate. Egg-shaped in outline.

Ovule. The structure which, after fertilization, becomes the seed.

P

Palmate. Lobed, divided, or veined in a radiate manner.

Pandurate. Fiddle-shaped.

Panicle. A compound inflorescence with pedicellate flowers.

Papilla. Small, rounded protuberances.

Parasite. A plant growing on a deriving nutrition from another living plant to which it is attached.

Pedate. A palmately lobed or divided leaf in which the two side lobes are again divided.

Pedicel. Stalk of one flower in an inflorescence.

Peduncle. Stalk supporting a flower cluster or a solitary flower.

Peltate. Shield-shaped; attached to the stalk by the lower surface, usually near the center.

Perfect. Flowers containing both functional male and female reproductive structures.

Perfoliate. A sessile leaf, leaflet, or bract whose base completely surrounds the stem, so that the stem appears to pass through the leaf.

P

Perianth. Collectively the calyx and corolla.

Pericarp. The wall of a fruit.

Personate. A tubular corolla with the lip nearly closed by a palate.

Petaloid. Resembling a petal in texture and color.

Petiole. The stalk of a leaf.

Pinnate. A compound leaf divided once with the leaflets arranged on both sides of the axis.

Plumose. Feathery

Procumbent. Trailing or lying flat, but not rooting at the nodes.

Pubescent. With dense, short, soft, straight trichomes.

Pustule. A small, blister-like elevation.

Pyriform. Pear-shaped.

R

Raceme. A simple, elongate, unbranched inflorescence with pedicellate flowers.

Rachis. The primary axes of an inflorescence or a pinnately compound

Rugose. Wrinkled. leaf.

Ray. The branch of an umbel.

Reniform. Kidney-shaped.

Repent. Creeping.

Retuse. With a shallow notch of an otherwise rounded or blunt apex.

Revolute. With the margins rolled backward, the edge turned under.

Rhombic. Diamond-shaped.

Rotund. Circular.

Rudimentary. Imperfectly developed and non-functional.

S

Scabrous. Rough to the touch.

Scandent. Climbing.

Seed. A mature ovule.

Sepal. One division of the calyx.

Septum. A partition.

Serrate. Toothed along the margin with sharp, forward-pointing teeth.

Sessile. Attached directly by the base, without a stalk.

Sinuate. With a strongly wavy margin.

Spadix. A spike with small, partially embedded flowers on a thickened fleshy axis in the Araceae, this usually subtended by a spathe.

Spathe. A usually large and solitary bract, surrounding an inflorescence.

Spike. An unbranched, elongate, inflorescence with sessile or subsessile flowers.

Sporangium. A body bearing spores.

Spore. In pteridophytes (ferns), the one cell reproductive structure.

Stamen. The male organ of the flower.

Stellate. Star-shaped; trichomes with branches radiating from the base.

Stigma. The upper part of the carpel or style with is receptive to pollen.

Stipe. A stalk.

Stipel. One of a pair of small stipulelike appendages on the leaflets of compound leaves.

Stipule. One of a pair of appendages found at the base of a petiole on many leaves.

Stolon. An elongate stem creeping on the surface of the ground.
Striate. Marked with fine, more or less parallel lines or ridges.
Style. The more or less elongated part of the carpel between the ovary and the stigma.
Subulate. Elongate and tapering gradually from the base to apex; awl-shaped.

T

Taproot. The main central root from which smaller branch roots originate.
Ternate. Borne in threes.
Testa. Seed coat.
Tetragonal. Four-sided.
Thyrse. The opening of a tubular calyx or corolla.
Thyriform, thyrroid. Resembling a thyrse.
Tomentose. With dense, matted, soft hairs.
Tomentulose. Diminutive of tomentose.
Triandrous. Having three stamens.
Trichome. A hairlike outgrowth from the epidermis.
Trifoliaolate. A compound leaf with three leaflets.
Truncate. With the base or apex transverse straight or nearly so, as if cut off.
Tuber. A thickened part of a rhizome.
Tuberous. Bearing tubers; thickened like a tuber.
Turbinate. Top-shaped; inversely conical.
Turgid. Swollen.

U

Unbel. An inflorescence where pedicels arise from a common point.
Unarmed. Lacking thorns, spines, or prickles.
Undulate. With a wavy margin or surface.
Unisexual. A flower with a functional stamen or carpel, but not both.
Vein. A strand of fibrovascular tissue visible without magnification.
Velutinous. Velvety; densely covered with fine short, soft, spreading trichomes.
Venation. The vein pattern.
Ventral. Front; the upper side of an organ.
Verruca. A wartlike projection.
Verrucose, verrucate. Having a warty surface.
Verticillate. Arranged in whorls.
Villous. Having long, soft, unmatted hairs.
Viscid. Sticky.

W

Whorl. An arrangement of three or more similar structures at a node or another common point.

Z

Zygomorphic. Having a bilateral symmetry, capable of being divisible by only one plane into equal halves; irregular.