

***Coreopsis leavenworthii*: Leavenworth's Tickseed¹**

Keighly Graves, Wendy Wilber, Tom Wichman, Claire Lewis, Gail Hansen, and Ryan Klein²

This Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ publication is part of a document series originally written by Edward F. Gilman. Visit <https://FloridaFriendlyLandscaping.com> to learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water resources and environment.

Introduction

Coreopsis is a genus of plants in the *Asteraceae* plant family, which contains around 40 species. Thirteen species occur in Florida, eleven of which are widely considered native to Florida. *Coreopsis* is the Florida state wildflower. *Coreopsis leavenworthii* is found throughout Florida, and until recently was considered endemic.

Leavenworth's tickseed is an herbaceous annual to short-lived perennial with an upright growth habit (Figure 1). It has a height and spread of 1 to 3 feet. Leaves are deciduous, pinnately to bipinnately compound, and 6 to 8 inches in length (Figure 2). Yellow flowers with a dark brown center are held upright upon tall leafless stems (Figure 3). Flowers are followed by the dried seed head, which contains small, brown achenes (Figure 4). Leavenworth's tickseed may be used as edging, mass plantings, in wildflower meadows, and may be used as a part of a pollinator garden as it attracts butterflies and bees.



Figure 1. Full form—*Coreopsis leavenworthii*: Leavenworth's tickseed.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden



Figure 2. Leaf—*Coreopsis leavenworthii*: Leavenworth's tickseed.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden



Figure 3. Flower—*Coreopsis leavenworthii*: Leavenworth's tickseed.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden



Figure 4. Fruit—*Coreopsis leavenworthii*: Leavenworth's tickseed.
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General Information

Scientific name: *Coreopsis leavenworthii*

Pronunciation: kor-ree-OP-sis lev-en-WERTH-ee-eye

Common name(s): Leavenworth's tickseed

Family: Asteraceae

Plant type: herbaceous; annual to short-lived perennial

USDA hardiness zones: 8A through 11B (Figures 5 and 6)

USDA Hardiness Zones 8A-11A

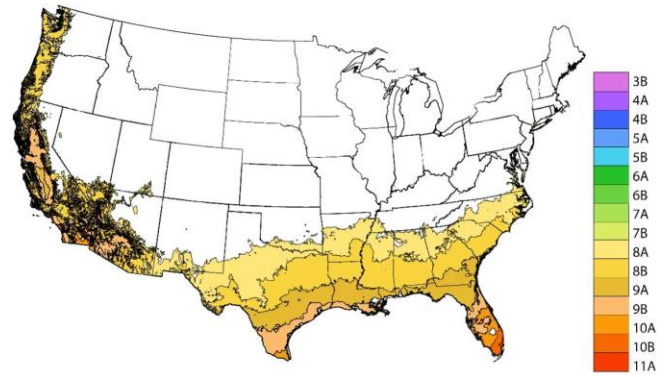


Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 8A to 11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

USDA Hardiness Zones 8A-11A

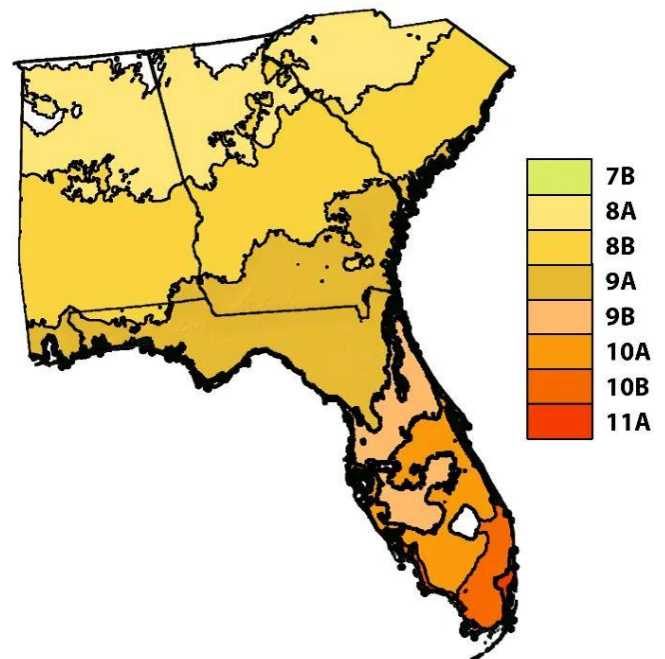


Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zones in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 8A to 11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

Planting months for seed all zones: Sept. to Jan.

Planting months for transplants zones 8 and 9: mid Mar. to May

Planting months for transplants zones 10 and 11: mid Feb. to May

Origin: native to Florida

Invasive potential: may self-seed each year

Uses: edging; mass planting; attracts butterflies; wildflower meadow

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of your local area to find the plant

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 1 to 3 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: pinnately to bipinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear to oblong

Leaf venation: not applicable

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 6 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: not applicable

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: yellow, with dark brown center

Flower characteristic: spring, summer, fall, winter; depending on region of Florida

Fruit

Fruit type: achene

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1/8 inch

Fruit cover: not applicable

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun; plant grows in partial shade

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay; occasionally wet

Drought tolerance: low

Soil salt tolerance: unknown

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: may flower during winter months in south Florida

Use and Management

Coreopsis flowers most abundantly when planted in full sun but also thrive in partial shade. It is adaptable to a range of soil conditions that are acidic to slightly alkaline in pH. A well-drained soil that is not too rich will aid in maintaining the plant's upright growth structure. Keep the soil relatively moist and remove dead flowers immediately to prolong blooming. Coreopsis species are generally short-lived and may only last 3 to 4 seasons. Coreopsis work well as a border or edging in a garden and are also excellent for naturalizing as they will reseed themselves. New plants may emerge beyond the intended area of cultivation. The stalks may become long and weak and tend to break in windy or rainy weather.

Seed is the most common method of propagation for coreopsis. Plants may also be divided in the spring or fall.

Design Considerations

Coreopsis provides bright, long-season yellow blooms and fine, airy foliage, making it ideal for massed drifts in naturalized meadows, informal borders, and roadsides where it can freely self-seed. Thriving in full sun to light shade, it adapts to various soils from moist clay to dry sand. Pair it effectively with grasses like pink muhly (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) and Fakahatchee (*Tripsacum dactyloides*); sun-loving wildflowers such as blanketflower (*Gaillardia pulchella*), Stokes' aster (*Stokesia laevis*), and blue sage (*Salvia* spp.); and structural accents like coontie (*Zamia integrifolia*) and yucca (*Yucca* spp.). In wetter sites, it combines well with blue flag iris (*Iris virginica*) and cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) for extended seasonal interest. Space plants 12–18 inches apart, deadheading selectively to prolong blooming while allowing some to set seed for natural regeneration.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.

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² Keighly Graves, horticultural science specialist, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program; Wendy Wilber, state program coordinator and Extension agent IV, UF/IFAS Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program; Tom Wichman, Extension program manager, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program, UF/IFAS Center for Land Use Efficiency; Claire Lewis, state specialized agent II and director Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program, UF/IFAS Center for Land Use Efficiency; Gail Hansen, professor, sustainable landscape design, UF/IFAS Department of Horticultural Sciences; Ryan Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture, UF/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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