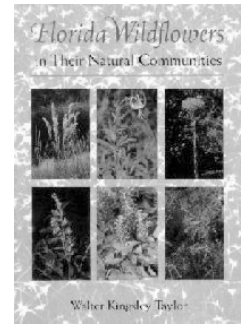


Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities



BOOK REVIEW

by Cynthia (Sid) Taylor

Dr. Walter Kingsley Taylor, author of *The Field Guide to Florida Wildflowers*, has a new book to aid us in plant identification. *Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities* will be a classic text for years to come. It is organized by habitat types: pine flatwoods, sandhills, clayhills, scrubs, temperate hardwoods forests, coastal uplands, rockland pinelands, rockland hardwood hammocks, and ruderal (disturbed) sites.

Taylor features two plant photos and their text per page. He uses the least observed specimen for his visual images, then describes in the comment section the other, more familiar species of the genus with handy I.D. techniques included.

Of particular interest to me are the historical details of the species names that are derived from the names of the botanists that worked in Florida in initial exploration and other historical figures here. Our official state wildflower, *Coreopsis leavenworthii* was named after a Yale graduated army surgeon who served at Ft. King during the Second Seminole war in 1838. (*Coreopsis* means bedbug due to seed shape.) This is all new information to me and wonderful details to share with others.

Also included in the comment section are: endemic info, uses for food and healing by Florida's indigenous peoples, the latest molecular work to determine family associations and the family placements by other authors, and sometimes the color the plant becomes when dried, which helps with correct identification. (*Callicarpa americana* or beautyberry has been classified as a verbena traditionally, and is now considered to be a mint.)

If I had to pick a favorite flower for myself, I have always had a special affinity for Yellow-star grass (*Hypoxis juncea*). I like to call it 'our daffodil' due to the lovely color and early spring appearance it makes. It has been classified as an Amaryllis. Now I need to adjust my story as it has been pulled out and its own family created (to honor it): *Hypoxidaceae*.

Everyone will find ease in the use of the index. Botanical and common names are listed in a singular compilation. The range sections in the species layouts are very specific by county.

I've not lived any further north in the state than here in Citrus county. I am enjoying the many Panhandle specific species that are featured with photographs and their descriptions. When I manage to plan travel time to go in search of some of "these beauties" (as Dr. Taylor would say) there is a comprehensive 'Places to Visit' appendix in the back. It is setup first by habitat, then by county, and then lists the specific place and the geographical determinations. I found two Citrus plants in the text that I have not experienced first hand yet: white colic-root (*Aletris obovata*) and scrub buckwheat (*Erigonum longifolium*).

I don't want to give too much away. Buy the Book. It was published in 1998 by the University Press of Florida, 15 Northwest 15th Street, Gainesville, Fl. 32611. The cost is \$24.95.

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