



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

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### FYN TOPIC: Coral Creeper - *Barleria repens*

**Question:** Last week's column identified a nursery pot marked as 'Coral Bells' as possibly being an azalea. It also could have been the shrub form of a common, tropical groundcover known as *Baleria repens*. In what places does this plant grow best?  
Donna C. Ft Myers

**Answer:** If plants could only speak! *Barleria repens* is a tough, little exotic plant that stays evergreen all winter. Used in central Florida and south (Hardiness zones 10 and 11), this small shrub or vine looks strikingly similar to the dwarfing, 'Karume' hybrid azalea. Most gardeners will see this plant sprawling on the ground under a shade tree. It looks both shrubby while other forms look vine-like and quickly covers bare ground. A better identifier for this non-native, exotic plant would be 'Coral Creeper.' Whatever form of this plant you buy, it is always low-growing. It stays below 2 feet high. And, if it climbs, the vine climbs to about 6 feet on a tree trunk or wall. Unlike the azalea, Coral Creeper can send out new stems that become rooted on their own. This plant has small, rounded and glossy green leaves accented with pinkish or salmon-colored, tubular flowers. It survives best with regular irrigation and prefers being planted in partial shade and soils containing some organic matter.



*Barleria repens* – Coral Creeper

#### Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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