

Flaveria linearis

Family: Asteraceae

Yellowtop; narrowleaf yellowtop; yellowtop flaveria



Note the long erect stem, narrow leaves, and flat-topped inflorescence.

Yellowtop

Syn: *Flaveria latifolia*; *F. linearis* Lag. var *latifolia*; *F. maritime* Kunth; *F. tenuifolia* Nuttall; *Gymnosperma nudatum* Nuttall; *Selloa nudata* Nuttall

Origin: South and coastal central Florida; southern Mexico, Bahamas, Belize and Cuba

USDA Zone: 10a—11 (down to 30°F)

Growth Rate: Moderate to fast

Flowering months: Primarily summer and fall; occasionally winter and spring.

Leaf Persistence: Evergreen

Messiness: Low

Light Tolerance: Full to partial sun

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Drought Tolerance: Medium; requires supplemental water once established

Soil: Wide range

Nutritional Requirements: Low

Major problems: None

Typical Dimensions: 2' to 4' tall and wide

Propagation: Seed or division

Human Hazards: Some people are allergic to the sap.

Uses: Nectar plant for many Florida butterflies; wildflower garden; accent along border.



Bee nectaring on flowers of yellowtop.

Yellowtop, *Flaveria linearis*, can be found growing in disturbed areas, hammocks, pinelands, at beaches and along roadsides in coastal south and central Florida. The plant often grows in marshy areas, in saline and alkaline soils. It tolerates brackish water and even occasional inundation of salt water. Yellowtop is moderately drought-tolerant but can be found in higher, dry regions. The yellowtop plant has low wind tolerance, even experiencing uprooting and broken branches in high winds. Many species of butterflies, skippers, and bees use the flowers as a nectar source, making it a popular addition to butterfly gardens. The leaves are opposite-growing, narrow and 2-3 inches long. New growth stems are reddish in color. This herbaceous perennial has many sprawling branches that once or twice a year, primarily summer and fall, terminate in clusters of small, bright yellow flower disks called corymbs. Each flat-topped flower head has 5-8 florets. The plant grows to about 3 feet tall forming mounds that are broader than tall. It can become leggy and unkempt looking after peak flowering. In some cases, the entire plant may dieback. At this time, it can be cut back to the ground. New growth will emerge from reinvigorated stems in late winter or early spring. Yellowtop readily reseeds.



The color of the new growth is red. The leaf is simple, linear, entire (no teeth or lobe), sessile (without petiole) with opposite stem arrangement.



The inflorescence is a flat-topped compound corymb.





Yellowtop in cultivation.

Physical Description

Leaf: Simple, blade linear¹, margin entire², sessile³

Leaf arrangement: Opposite

Flower: In clusters of flat-topped compound corymbs

Fruit: Inconspicuous achene⁴

Stem: Erect

Dead-heading will reduce volunteer seedlings next season. Depending on available moisture, seedlings may emerge in winter. Emerged seedlings will flower the same year.

Thus, several generations of yellowtops will flower simultaneously. In the garden, plant yellowtop about two feet apart. Nursery plants are often weak-stemmed and easily broken. Generally this doesn't hurt the plants as they readily resprout from broken or trimmed stems. In south Florida, it can be planted at anytime of the year.



Yellowtop makes an excellent accent along roadways and at the edges of natural areas.

1. a narrow flat shape with parallel sides. The length is over 4 times the width.
2. No teeth or lobes on the margins.
3. Without a stalk (petiole) of any kind.
4. A small dry, 1-seeded indehiscent fruit.

This fact sheet was reviewed by Tom Becker, Lee County Extension Agent; Jenny Evans, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation; Peggy Cruz, Lee County Extension Service.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M.