

Characteristics of Florida Honey Plants

MONOFLORAL HONEY PLANTS				
Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Growing Environment(s)	Bloom Months in Florida Variable based on location	Other Notes
Citrus	Many	Grown as a crop.	January to June	Famous in Florida and often sold to tourists as orange blossom honey despite potentially coming from any citrus crop. Despite its profitability, many beekeepers are hesitant to enter into contracts with citrus growers due to intense chemical treatments for citrus canker and greening diseases.
Gallberry	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Wild understory shrub in deciduous forest habitats and scrub habitats	April to June	Produces a rich, buttery honey. Because of the overlapping bloom period and habitat of saw palmetto and gallberry, beekeepers must be careful to prevent mixing in the supers.
Saw palmetto	<i>Serenoa repens</i>	Wild understory shrub in scrub pine habitats	Late April to mid-July	Blooms are numerous, small inflorescences. Because of the overlapping bloom period and habitat of saw palmetto and gallberry, beekeepers must be careful to prevent mixing in the supers.
Scrub palmetto	<i>Sabal etonia</i>	Wild in scrub habitat	Late April to mid-July	Have small inflorescences at the base, similar to saw palmetto.
Dwarf palmetto	<i>Sabal minor</i>	Wild plants in scrub habitat. Sometimes used as an ornamental plant.	March to April	Have a fire ecology associated with their habitat and it may take them a while to produce sufficient nectar after being disturbed.
Cabbage palm, cabbage palmetto	<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	Commonly found in the wild, but are also popular ornamental plants.	June to September	Trees produce large inflorescences at the top of the trunk near the fronds.
Clover	<i>Trifolium spp.</i>	Common as a wild plant, but they are also grown as crop.	April to September	Many clover species are common throughout the United States. Clover crops in the Dakotas are a popular destination for commercial beekeepers. Clover honey is a very popular monofloral honey and commonly found in grocery stores. Is a less reliable source of monofloral honey in Florida due to intense sunlight and heat in the summer
Ogeechee tupelo	<i>Nyssa ogeche</i>	Grow wild in swampy habitats.	April to May	Can only be found in the Florida panhandle, Southeastern Georgia, and parts of China. These stands are highly competitive areas for beekeepers.

Black gum tupelo, sour gum tupelo	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Grow wild in swampy habitats.	March to April	Grows in the eastern United States and central and southern Mexico.
Willow	<i>Salix spp.</i>	Grow along creeks and streams.	December to April	Can make up a monofloral honey under the right conditions, but also often contribute to wildflower honey. Several species grow throughout the United States. The Florida willow (<i>Salix floridana</i>) is listed as a vulnerable species.
Spanish needle	<i>Bidens spp.</i>	Often found in disturbed habitats including along roadways and in mowed fields.	Year round	Provides valuable forage at a time when many beekeepers need to provide supplemental syrup to their bees. There are several species that can be found throughout the United States and that are common in Florida.
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	Grows wild in pastures, meadows, or waste areas.	August to December	This plant grows in many places, but it does not produce the same amount of nectar everywhere. It can, however, produce copious amounts of nectar in certain areas which can be useful for making sure colonies have enough honey to overwinter with. Goldenrod is common in Florida, however the lovebugs it tends to attract keep bees from foraging on it as much.
Aster	<i>Aster spp.</i>	Commonly used as ornamental landscape plants.	June to first frost	Aster species are common throughout the United States.
Black mangrove	<i>Avicennia germinans</i>	Found in shallow coastlines, estuaries, and inlets.	June to July	These trees are common in south Florida. This is one of three species of mangrove found in the United States (the others being Red and White).

POLYFLORAL (WILDFLOWER) HONEY PLANTS

Common Name(s)	Scientific Name	Growing Environment(s)	Bloom Months in Florida Variable based on location	Other Notes
Coreopsis, tickseed	<i>Coreopsis spp.</i>	Grows wild in ditches, dikes, prairies, and meadows. Some species are used in ornamental gardens.	April to September	Can be found growing wild throughout the United States.
Gopher apple	<i>Licania michauxii</i>	Used as an ornamental ground-cover.	May to June	Some species have gone extinct due to deforestation. The fruit is an important food source for native wildlife (such as the gopher tortoise, which gives the plant its name) and can be eaten by humans as well.

Narrow-leaf yellowtop	<i>Flaveria linearis</i>	Used in landscaping to attract butterflies. Grows in disturbed areas, hammocks, pineland, and beaches where it can tolerate a low level of saltwater.	April to September	It is a common allergen.
Swamp sunflower	<i>Helianthus augustifolius</i>	Grows in wetlands, swamps, and coastal areas. Sometimes used in ornamental landscapes.	June to November	
Blanketflower, Indian blanket	<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	Ornamental plant used to attract pollinators.	June to October	Can be found throughout the United States.
Blackeyed Susan	<i>Rudbekia hirta</i>	Ornamental plant used to attract pollinators.	April to May	Can be found throughout the United States.
Primrose willow	<i>Ludwigia spp.</i>	Generally aquatic environments	May to December	This genus contains 75 species.
St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum spp.</i>	Do best in areas with winter or summer-dominant rainfall.	June to August	There are about 370 <i>Hypericum</i> species throughout the world. This genus has a complex life cycle with vegetative states and can reproduce sexually or asexually.
Partridge pea	<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	Thrives in recently burned areas.	May to October	Can help prevent soil erosion after fires. They are a species of legume. This species is native to the eastern United States. Although it is pollinated only by bees, the plant also contains extrafloral nectaries that attract many other organisms to it.
Red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Grow in a wide variety of environments. Often used in landscaping.	November to March	A common tree found throughout the United States. Beekeepers in areas like Florida often consider the red maple bloom to be the “kickoff” of the nectar flow because it is usually the first bloom of the season.
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Grows best in moist, but well-drained sites.	January to March	Develop their flowers before their leaves during the growing season. Can be found along the east coast from Florida up into Canada. The flowers and seeds are a traditional food source for some Native American tribes.
Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Common ornamental tree	February to June	Usually found growing east of Mississippi. Dogwood blossoms are not the most attractive to bees, but bees will forage on them if there is little else in the area.

Holly	<i>Ilex spp.</i>	Common ornamental plants	March to May	This genus includes about 480 species. They have small, white flowers that honey bees are usually attracted to. Many holly species can be found throughout the United States.
Giant ironweed	<i>Vernonia gigantea</i>	Grows wild in hardwood forests and pine flatwoods.	June to August	Found in the eastern United States. This plant can be used as an ornamental in a pollinator garden, but it requires extra pruning and care to avoid excess spreading.
Dense blazing star	<i>Liatris spicata</i>	Grows in hardwood forest and pine flatwood habitats.	July to September	Found in the eastern United States. This plant can be used as an ornamental in a pollinator garden, but it requires extra pruning and care to avoid excess spreading.
Knotweed	<i>Polygonum spp.</i>	Wildflower and also used as an ornamental plant	May to August	They are common in northern regions of the United States, but can also be found in Florida and the southeast. Knotweed is used as a food source in Asia.
Sensitive briar, mimosa	<i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>	Grows wild and is not often seen in landscaping.	July to September	This plant is best known for its “sensitive” leaves that fold up at night or when touched. It is commonly found in the southeast United States, all the way to Texas.
Drummond phlox	<i>Phlox drummondii</i>	Is a common ornamental plant.	April to June	It is native to Texas but can be found in abundance throughout the southeastern United States. It comes in a variety of colors.
Thistle	<i>Cirsium spp.</i>	Grow wild, not often used as ornamental.	Highly varied, based on species and location.	<i>Cirsium</i> is one of a few genera known colloquially as thistles. They are known for attracting butterflies and goldfinches. Species introduced outside their native range can be extremely invasive.
Mexican clover, pusley	<i>Richardia spp.</i>	Grow in warm, temperate regions.	Year round	It is a genus with around 15 species. Some species are annuals, while others are perennials.