

Plants of Florida Springs, Spring Runs, and Sinkholes

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This table focuses on the species most likely to be of interpretive interest in springs ecosystems. Explanatory text and downloadable files are posted at <http://floridaspringsinstitute.org>. This information was compiled by Linda Duever through a Protect Florida Springs grant and should be cited as follows: Duever, L.C. 2012. Characteristic species of Florida springs, spring runs, and sinkholes. A set of tables funded by the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Inc. and published in cooperation with the Florida Springs Institute. Conway Conservation. Micanopy, FL.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Notes
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	red maple	These common wetland trees are frequently noticed around springs and spring runs, where their pinkish-red flowers and seeds attract attention in the spring and yellow to red leaf colors make them stand out in the fall. http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=2120&display=photos
<i>Adiantum tenerum</i>	brittle maidenhair fern	This terrestrial fern grows on rocks in sinkholes and along the banks of spring runs. http://www.kingsnake.com/westindian/adiantumtenerum1.JPG
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	alligatorweed	EXOTIC. This invasive species forms mats on the surface of the water by extending runners from the shoreline. It is problematic in many wetland environments. http://loweins.com/alligatorweed.htm
<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>	smooth water hyssop	This common wetland plant often forms low mats around the edges of springs and spring runs. It has pretty little purplish-white flowers and is the favorite host plant of the white peacock butterfly. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Starr_070815-8059_Bacopa_monnieri.jpg
<i>Blechnum occidentale</i>	sinkhole fern	This terrestrial fern grows in rocky sinkholes and similar damp shady places with exposed limestone. http://biogeodb.stri.si.edu/bioinformatics/dfm/metas/view/27889
<i>Cabomba caroliniana</i>	cabomba	This water plant is common in springs. Whorls of fine linear leaves make it a distinctive aquarium plant. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/76
<i>Campsis radicans</i>	orange trumpet creeper	These high-climbing orange-flowered vines often grow around sinkhole drains and seasonally flooded sinks, where they tolerate both extended droughts and occasional deep flooding. http://extension.missouri.edu/p/ipm1021-15
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	sugarberry	This common tree frequently grows in the rocky ground around sinkholes, where its warty white trunks attract attention. The berries are a valuable food for birds. http://www.foragingtexas.com/2007/07/hackberry.html

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<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	buttonbush	This shrub is common in a variety of wetland types, including seasonally flooded sinkholes, where it is sometimes the only species surviving extreme variations in water level. The round "sputnik-like" white flowers attract attention and butterflies. http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/butterfly/msg071027001892.html
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	hornwort	This water plant is common in springs. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/94
<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	atlantic white cedar	This evergreen tree is abundant in more varied habitats further north, but, in peninsular Florida, it only occurs along a few spring runs. http://www.flickr.com/photos/alan_cressler/5224897939/in/photostream
<i>Chara</i>	stonewort	Springs provide good habitat for these common aquatic plants.
<i>Cicuta mexicana</i>	water hemlock	This dramatic plant often grows around springs or along spring runs, where its large compound leaves and big umbels of white flowers make it conspicuous. It is extremely poisonous. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/99
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	taro	EXOTIC. This waterside "elephant ear" is an important tropical food plant that has become an invasive weed in Florida. It grows in several spring systems, including Rainbow and Weeki Wachee. http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5344087
<i>Cornus foemina</i>	stiff-cornel dogwood	This native dogwood often grows in damp soil near springs. http://www.flickr.com/photos/35605280@N05/6364702837/
<i>Crataegus marshallii</i>	parsley hawthorn	These spiny lacy-leaved shrubs often grow along the ravines that channel water into sinkhole drains. http://www.vaplantatlas.org/index.php?do=plant&plant=2667
<i>Crinum americanum</i>	swamplily	These strap-leaved white-flowered lilies are often confused with Hymenocallis, but the petals are not joined at the base. Swamplilies are common in many types of wetlands, including springs systems. http://regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantdetail.asp?tx=Crinamer

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<i>Egeria densa</i>	brazilian waterweed	EXOTIC. This now-illegal species was a popular aquarium plant under the incorrect name "elodea". It has escaped and become a nuisance in aquatic habitats. Egeria is easily confused with hydrilla, but has larger three-petalled white flowers held above the water. http://www.outdooralabama.com/fishing/freshwater/where/ponds/p/ap/guide/submersed/egeria_d.cfm
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	water hyacinth	EXOTIC. This lavender-flowered floating plant chokes Florida waterways, making them unnavigable. It invades springs, where it may cover the water surface and block light needed by submerged vegetation. Herbiciding it creates clouds of smothering debris. http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1319093
<i>Fontinalis</i>	water moss	These water plants are common in springs.
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	pumpkin ash	These hickory-like deciduous swamp trees are abundant around many north Florida springs. Smaller pop ash (<i>Fraxinus caroliniana</i>) trees are more common in similar habitats further south. http://www.discoverlife.org/mp/20q?search=Fraxinus+pennsylvanica&guide=Trees&cl=US/VT
<i>Hibiscus coccineus</i>	red swamp hibiscus	This plant's huge red flowers and marijuana-like foliage always attract attention. It grows in a variety of sunny wetland habitats, including those around springs and spring runs. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hibiscus_coccineus_-_Tatters_001.jpg
<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	hydrilla	EXOTIC. Dense tangles formed by the long leafy stems of this rapid-growing invasive water plant choke out native vegetation and interfere with swimming and boating in many aquatic habitats. It often creates severe problems in springs and spring runs. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/183
<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	floating pennywort	These common wetland plants with coin-size roundish leaves form floating mats around the edges of springs and spring runs. The leaf margins of this species are notched, rather than entire. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/187
<i>Hydrocotyle umbellata</i>	water pennywort	These common wetland plants with coin-size roundish leaves form mats around the edges of springs and spring runs. The leaf margins are completely circular with no notch. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/187

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<i>Hygrophila polysperma</i>	hygro	EXOTIC. This now-illegal aquarium plant has become an invasive weed. It likes actively flowing water and sometimes invades springs, competing aggressively even in shady places where few other plants do well. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/191
<i>Hymenocallis rotata</i>	spring-run spiderlily	Big white flowers with cuplike centers and long trailing petals draw attention to this strap-leaved lily. Spiderlily taxonomy is confusing, but <i>H. rotata</i> is the species characteristic of Florida springs and spring runs. Often confused with <i>Crinum americanum</i> . https://my-plant.org/clade/monocots/gallery/cimg0601
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	dahoon holly	This common wetland holly often grows near springs. Visitors notice the pink lichens on the smooth light grey bark and the bright red berries. http://www.discoverlife.org/20/q?search=Ilex+cassine
<i>Illicium parviflorum</i>	yellow star anise	This leafy aromatic shrub grows in dense thickets along certain spring runs and seepage streams in central Florida. It makes a good landscape shrub. The flowers are yellow. FNAI G2/S2. http://www.flickr.com/photos/forestclay/5769900357/?q=illicium+parviflorum
<i>Ipomoea alba</i>	moonvine	The heart-shaped leaves of these big white night-blooming morningglories sometimes cover streamside vegetation along spring runs. They grow more vigorously on nutrient-enriched sites, like those downslope of septic systems or fertilized lawns. http://www.floridata.com/ref/I/ipom_alb.cfm
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	water spinach	EXOTIC. This aggressive aquatic morningglory is an Oriental food plant that has escaped into canals, ditches, lakes, and spring systems in west central Florida. It is an illegal noxious weed that spreads over the water surface on floating stems. http://www.forestryimages.org/browse/subthumb.cfm?sub=5751
<i>Lemna</i>	duckweed	These tiny floating plants often form yellow-green sheets on the surface of still waters, especially in places with elevated nutrient levels.
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	cardinal flower	Spikes of red blooms call attention to this wildflower, which frequently occurs in the swamps around springs and spring runs. http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Photo.aspx?id=2684

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<i>Ludwigia repens</i>	purple ludwigia	This common plant grows in springs and spring runs as well as in mats along their damp shorelines. The undersides of the leaves are a rich purplish-red color. It is a popular aquarium plant. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/250
<i>Lygodium japonicum</i>	japanese climbing fern	EXOTIC. This extremely invasive vine is often found around sinkholes, especially where roadside runoff drains towards them. It normally climbs into trees, but has been observed underwater. Spreads by dustlike spores carried by wind or on fur or clothing. http://www.invasive.org/browse/subthumb.cfm?sub=3045
<i>Lyngbya wollei</i>	lyngbya	This native blue-green algae multiplies rapidly in response to elevated nitrates], forming filamentous mats that smother other vegetation when water levels are low. It can give swimmers an itchy rash. http://grove.ufl.edu/~bests/pdfs/050628%20Jason%20Evans.pdf
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	wax myrtle	This nitrogen-fixing olive-green shrub is common in wet-mesic environments throughout Florida. It makes a good evergreen landscape shrub. Birds feast on the waxy grey berries in fall-winter. http://www.flickr.com/photos/skipbro/3338348638/
<i>Myriophyllum laxum</i>	piedmont water milfoil	This fine-leaved water plant is common in springs. http://www.flickrriver.com/photos/tags/myriophyllumlaxum/interesting/
<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	eurasian water milfoil	EXOTIC. This invasive weed prefers quiet brackish waters, but also occurs in flowing freshwater systems, including springs. http://www.invasive.org/weedcd/species/3055.htm
<i>Najas guadalupensis</i>	southern naiad	This is the water plant most frequently found in spring pools. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/280
<i>Nuphar advena</i>	spatterdock	This yellow-flowered waterlily with big emergent leaves is common around springs and spring runs. http://calphotos.berkeley.edu/cgi/img_query?enlarge=0000+0000+1209+0063
<i>Nyssa biflora</i>	blackgum	These common swamp trees often grow around springs and along spring runs, where their swollen bases show dark stains indicative of usual high water levels. The shiny oval leaves turn red and orange in the fall and the indigo-black fruits are an important wildlife food. http://www.flickr.com/photos/apalachicola/3512696897/

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<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	water lettuce	There is controversy as to whether this light-green cabbagelike floating plant is an invasive exotic that needs to be routinely eliminated or a probably-native plant that is acceptable in moderate numbers. Too much blocks sunlight and limits submerged vegetation. http://www.hear.org/pier/imagepages/singles/pistrp2.htm
<i>Potamogeton diversifolius</i>	water thread	This aquatic plant is common in springs. http://www.outdooralabama.com/fishing/freshwater/where/ponds/p/ap/guide/submersed/potamogetond.cfm
<i>Potamogeton illinoensis</i>	illinois pondweed	This aquatic plant is common in springs. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/341
<i>Potamogeton pectinatus</i>	sago pondweed	This aquatic plant prefers fast-moving, clear, calcareous water. It is common in springs. http://www.flickr.com/photos/alan_cressler/5224891091/in/photostream
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	live oak	Live oak has become the most common upland tree around Florida springs because it is extremely long-lived and resilient and can tolerate intense human activity impacts that kill more sensitive trees. http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-2n9BW0XjWEc/ToAkf2Etv2I/AAAAAAAAACQ/FAtihenKeRM/s1600/Quercus_virginiana_1%252C_Tallahassee%252C_20050312.jpg
<i>Sabal minor</i>	blue palmetto	These shade-loving palmettos are common along the edges of sinkhole drains, where they tolerate both extended droughts and deep flooding with fast-moving water. http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/showimage/127244/
<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	cabbage palm	Cabbage palms are common in varied habitats throughout Florida. They create picturesque scenes leaning over spring runs and attract attention because of the epiphytes growing in their "boots". http://everettj.people.cofc.edu/BIOL%20301%20Current%20Species%20Lists/Current%20Species%20Lists%20with%20Image%20Links/Images,%20Low%20resolution,%20August%202012/Species/Arecaceae,%20Sabal%20palmetto%20habit2,%20MM05.jpg
<i>Sagittaria kurziana</i>	springtape	Spring runs are the best habitat for this grasslike water plant. http://www.floridasprings.org/learn/life/plants/
<i>Sagittaria subulata</i>	dwarf sagittaria	This short grasslike water plant is common in springs. It is popular as an aquarium plant. http://www.freshwateraquariumplants.com/plantprofiles/narrowsag.html

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<i>Salix floridana</i>	florida willow	This relatively broad-leaved willow is most often found around springs and spring runs. FNAI G2/S2. FL Endangered. http://www.fnai.org/FieldGuide/pdf/Salix_floridana.PDF
<i>Sebastiania fruticosa</i>	sebastian bush	This little shrub is characteristic of the ravines that feed into north Florida sinkhole drains. http://www.carolinanature.com/trees/difr.html
<i>Spirogyra</i>	water silk	These common native green algae multiply rapidly in response to elevated nitrates, forming filamentous mats that smother other vegetation.
<i>Symphotrichum carolinianum</i>	climbing aster	Mounds of lavender flowers call attention to this clambering shrubby aster in the fall. It often grows in standing water. This is a valuable butterfly nectar plant . http://www.fnps.org/plants/plant/symphotrichum-carolinianum
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	baldcypress	These common swamp trees often grow around springs and along spring runs. They are well known for their buttressed bases and the "knees" that rise from their roots. http://www.floridata.com/ref/t/taxodium.cfm
<i>Tillandsia usneoides</i>	spanish moss	Grey beardlike tangles of these bromeliads are often luxuriantly draped on the trees around springs. http://www.floridata.com/ref/t/till_usn.cfm
<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>	poison ivy	Poison ivy vines grow luxuriantly in the moist forests around many Florida springs. Contact with the oily foliage causes many people to develop an itchy skin rash. http://www.rnr.lsu.edu/plantid/webtour/species/poisonivy/poisonivy.htm
<i>Vallisneria americana</i>	eelgrass	Dense stands of this grasslike underwater plant characterize springs and spring runs, where the long graceful blades bend with the flow. It is a popular aquarium plant. http://www.floridasprings.org/learn/life/plants
<i>Vaucheria</i>	water felt	Overgrowth of these filamentous yellow-green algae is a concern in nitrate-enriched springs.
<i>Vicia ocalensis</i>	ocala vetch	This white-flowered leguminous vine grows along spring runs, climbing over streambank thickets or marshes. It is restricted to a few sites around Ocala National Forest. FNAI G1/S1. FL Endangered. http://www.fnai.org/FieldGuide/pdf/Vicia_ocalensis.pdf

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<i>Zephyranthes atamasco</i>	atamasco lily	These white rainlilies used to be abundant along creeks feeding into sinkhole drains, but they have been trampled and/or choked out by siltation and invasive plants in many places. http://www.floridanature.org/species.asp?species=Zephyranthes_atamasco
<i>Zizania aquatica</i>	wild rice	This big broad-leaved grass grows in conspicuous clumps standing in the water along the edges of springs and spring runs. The grains are considered a valuable wildlife food as well as a gourmet delicacy. http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/wild_rice.htm