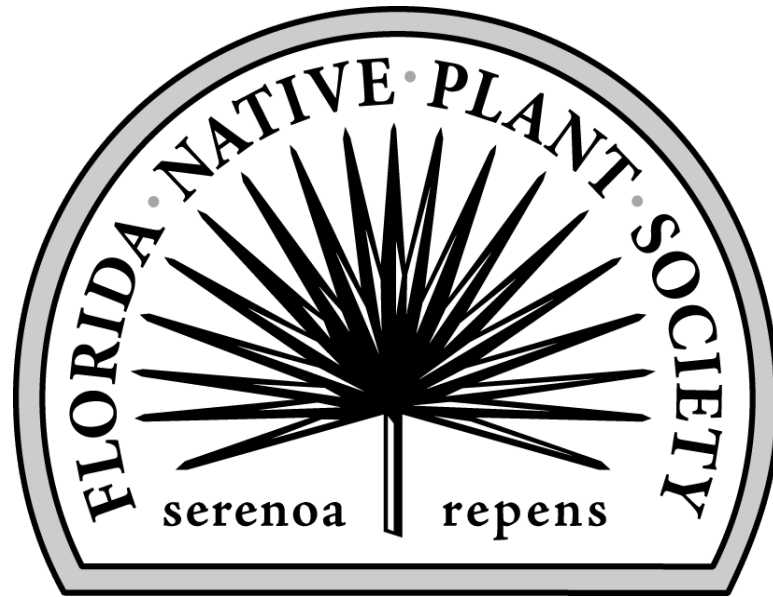


Florida Native Plant Society



Native Plant Owners Manual

Gaillardia pulchella – Blanket Flower

Mark Hutchinson

For Your Information

All date and seasonal references are applicable to the eastern panhandle of Hernando County where the plants portrayed in this presentation grow, and this manual was created. This area happens to be a cold spot in central Florida due to the Brooksville Ridge and approximates a Hardiness Zone of 8a or 8b, average annual low temperatures ranging between 10 and 20 °F.

Please note that any reference to medicinal or culinary use of plants or plant parts should in no way be considered an endorsement by the Florida Native Plant Society of any sort of experimentation or consumptive use.

Please do not attempt to rescue any native plants without first reviewing the [FNPS Policy on Transplanting Native Plants](#)

Feedback is welcome: mhutchinson10@tampabay.rr.com

Blanket Flower



© 2010 Mark Hutchinson

Gaillardia
pulchella



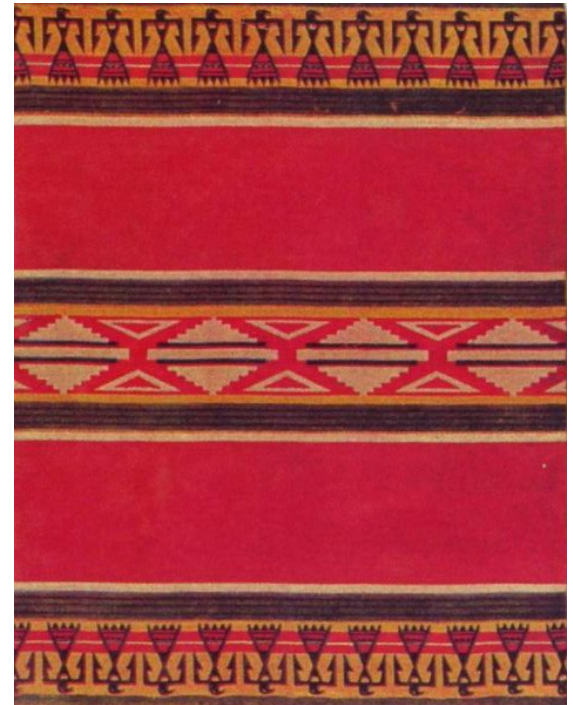
Firewheel, Indian blanket, rosering gaillardia,
sundance, blanket flower, Indianblanket
flower

Gaillardia (gay - LAR - dee - uh)

Named for M. Gaillard de
Charentonneau, 18th century
French magistrate and patron of
botany

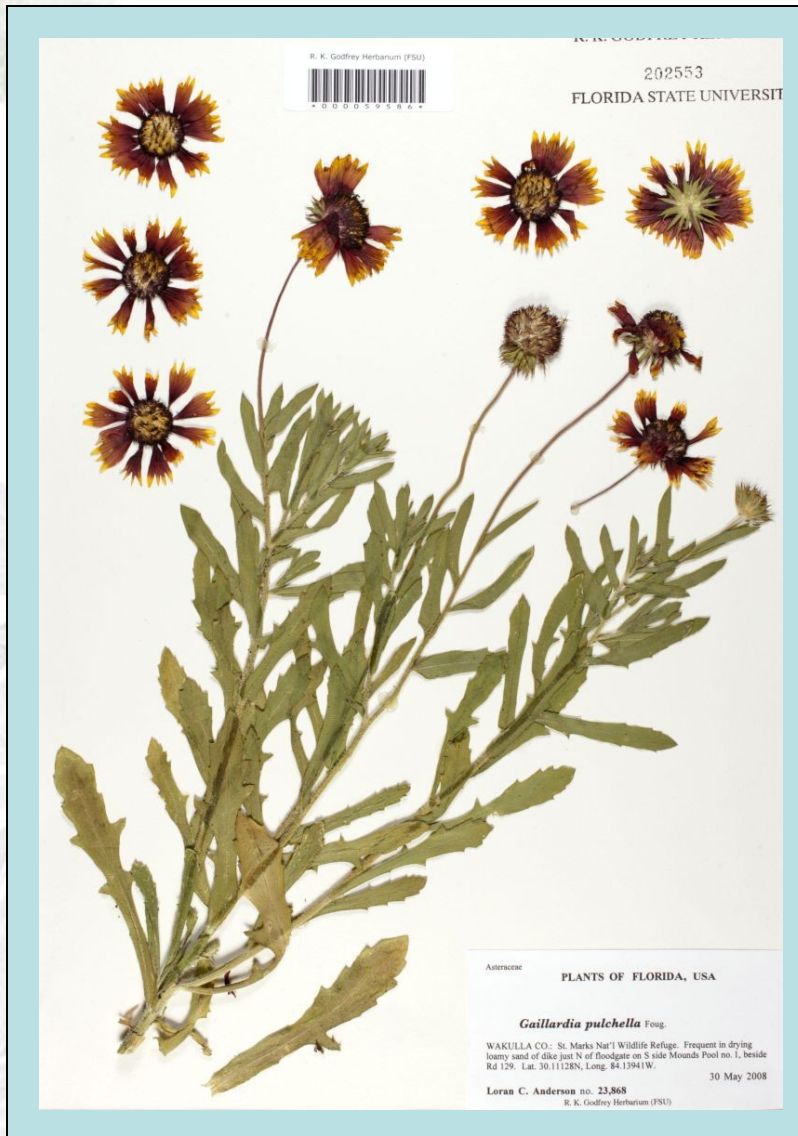
pulchella (pul - KEL - uh)

From the Latin '*pulcher*,'
meaning beautiful or pretty



Biological Classification of Firewheel

- Kingdom *Plantae* - Plants
- Subkingdom *Tracheobionta* - Vascular plants
- Superdivision *Spermatophyta* - Seed plants
- Division *Magnoliophyta* - Flowering plants
- Class *Magnoliopsida* - Dicotyledons
- Subclass *Asteridae*
- Order *Asterales*
- Family *Asteraceae* - Aster family
- Genus *Gaillardia* Foug. - blanketflower
- Species *Gaillardia pulchella* Foug. - firewheel

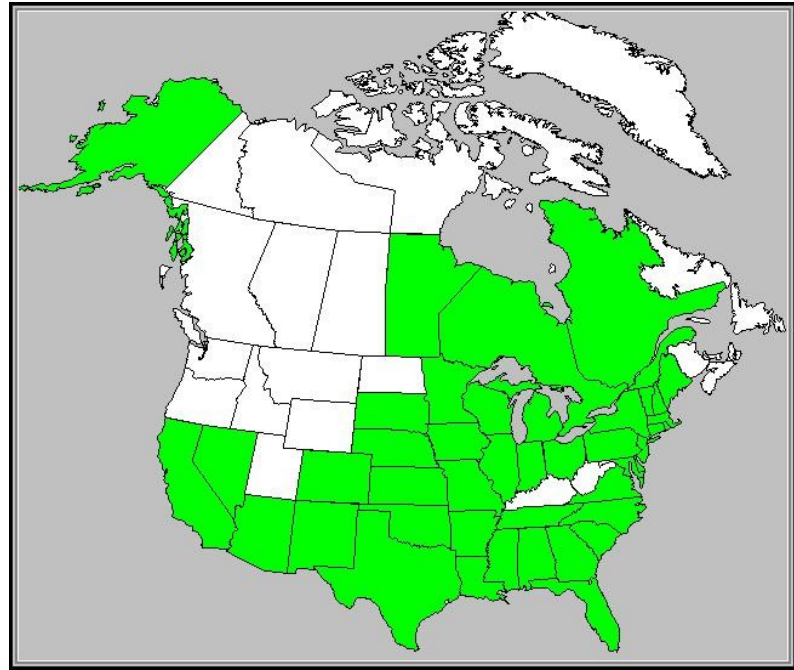


- The United States Department of Agriculture, NRCS, lists a total of thirteen species of the genus *Gaillardia* Foug. throughout the continent.
- The Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants identifies two species of this genus occurring in Florida, both native.

**R.K.Godfrey Herbarium (FSU)
#202553 Wakulla Co., 5/30/2008**

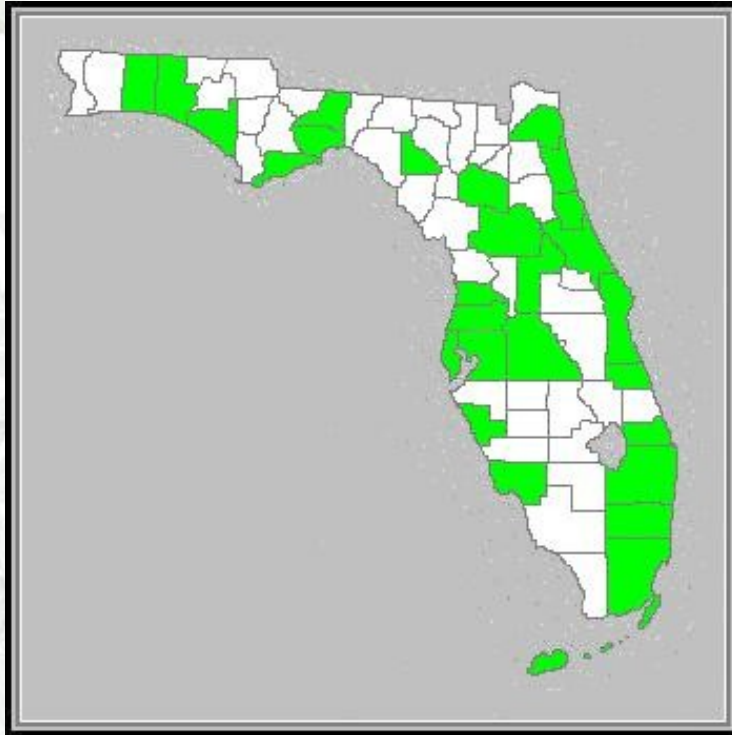
Species Distribution in North America

Gaillardia is native to North America, endemic to the entire continent from Mexico, through the United States and into Canada. The only exception being the northwest U.S. and western Canada. *Gaillardia pulchella* is the state flower of Oklahoma.



(For specific distribution within any of the shaded areas go to the USDA link provided on the reference page, and click the shaded area of interest.)

Species Distribution within Florida



(*vouchered – indicates that a fully documented dried specimen has been deposited in an approved herbarium)

- Indian Blanketflower, a sometimes perennial wildflower, is *vouchered in approximately twenty-seven counties in Florida, favoring the east coast, but spread throughout the state.
- *Gaillardia pulchella* prefers dry savannah, and open areas.

Growing Conditions



to



• *Gaillardia puchella* prefers direct sun to slight shade

- Firewheel favors sandy well-drained soil, but is not very picky about quality
- Neutral to strongly alkaline soil – 7.0 to 8.5 pH
- Good drought and salt tolerance
- Hardiness: USDA Zone 3a: to -39.9°C (-40°F)
to USDA Zone 10b: above 1.7°C (35°F)
- Flowering and seed production occur from spring into fall
- Height: 12 - 18 inches (30 - 45 cm.)

Plant Structure and Life Cycle

Gaillardia pulchella is a short-lived perennial in many warm coastal areas, and annual in areas where hard freezes occur.

The initial foliage of Firewheel consists of very hairy, multi-lobed lyrate leaves, that are much like dandelions.



While the stems and leaves of Gaillardia are always hairy, the leaves morph from lyrate in shape to oblanceolate, and then to spatulate. With time the stems begin to take on a woody texture.

Blanket Flower starts flowering in early spring and continues throughout the summer. Single flowers terminate a leaf-covered stem that extends from the plant base.

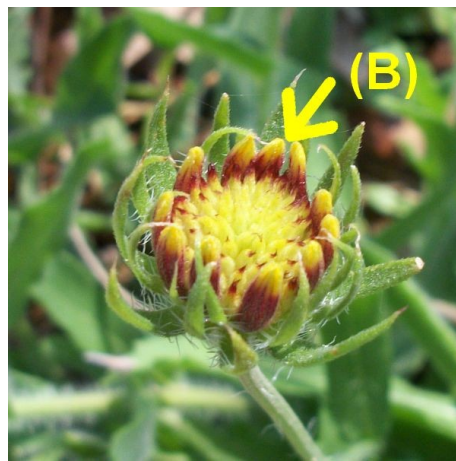
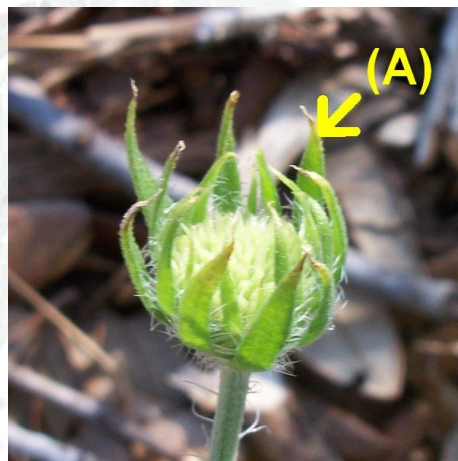




As the bud develops, conspicuous spiny sepals (A) surround the nearly colorless disc.

The corolla (B) begins to appear with ray florets that have yellow tips and an orange-to-red base. Color begins to appear in the disc.

Eventually, the ray florets (C) open completely and the disc floret assumes a wide range of colors, from yellow, to orange, to purple-red.



What appears to be a single flower is, in fact, a flower head, made up of many flowers. Both the ray florets of the corolla, and the florets that make up the disk, are individual flowers: each can be pollinated and produce seed.

Surprisingly, the ray florets of *Gaillardia pulchella* produce more seed than the disc florets.

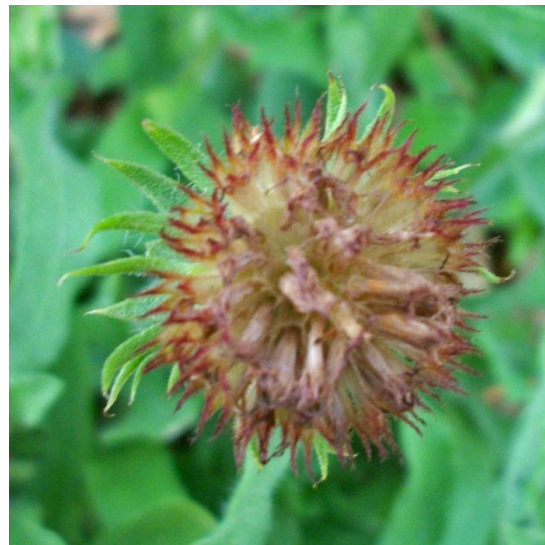


Native Americans found many medicinal uses for *Gaillardia pulchella* including; tea of root for gastroenteritis, chewed powdered root applied to skin disorders. Sore nipples of nursing mothers bathed in tea made from the plant, also used for sore eyes. The Kiowa tribe believed it brought good luck.



Seed Collection and Propagation

The ray florets of the bloom will drop off as the seeds mature and the seed head dries to a fuzzy ball (achene). Remove the achene and allow to dry completely. Then crush and collect the black seeds from within. *Gaillardia* should be treated like an annual: self-seeding and seed planting are the only way to assure plants for the next growing season.



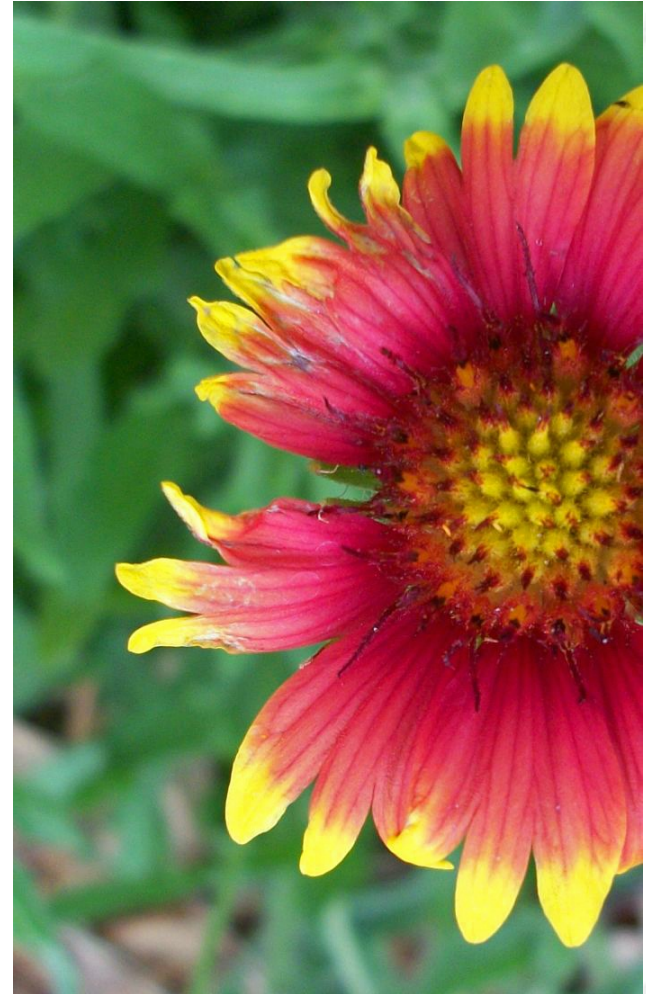
Plant in the fall, raking seeds into the soil. With proper watering the seeds will germinate in a week or two, and form a tap root prior to the first frost.

Maintenance and Care

The bloom period of *Gaillardia pulchella* can be extended by removing the deadheaded flowers once the ray florets have dropped. This practice will also reduce the plants ability to self-seed.

The flowers of Gaillardia are quite hardy and last long in flower arrangements.

Avoid soggy soil as *Gaillardia* is prone to root rot.



Presentation References

- U.S. distribution and biologic classification

[USDA](#) - Natural Resource Conservation Service

- Florida distribution

[Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants](#)

- Herbarium specimen

FSU Robert K. Godfrey [Herbarium](#)

- Growing conditions and general information

[Wildflower Center](#) University of Texas - Austin

[Wikipedia](#)

[Floridata](#)

Presentation References (cont.)

- Native American Ethnobotany

[University of Michigan](#)

- Nectar Food Plants

[Biospherenursery.com](#)

- FNPS – Plants in your area

[FNPS.org](#) This Link will take you to a map of Florida, click your county on the map to see if Firewheel can be found there.

- [Florida Plants](#) by zone and habitat, use your county name or zip-code to see native habitat classifications and appropriate plants.

- For more in-depth study:

Native Florida Plants: Low Maintenance Landscaping and Gardening. Robert G. Haehle and Joan Brookwell. 2004 (revised edition). Taylor Trade Publishing. ISBN 1589790510.

A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants. Rufino Osorio. 2001. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. ISBN 0813018528.

Grafting, Budding, Cutting, Layering & Other Ways of Propagating Fruit Plants in Florida. 1995. Gainesville: Institute of Food & Agricultural Science. ISBN 0916287092.