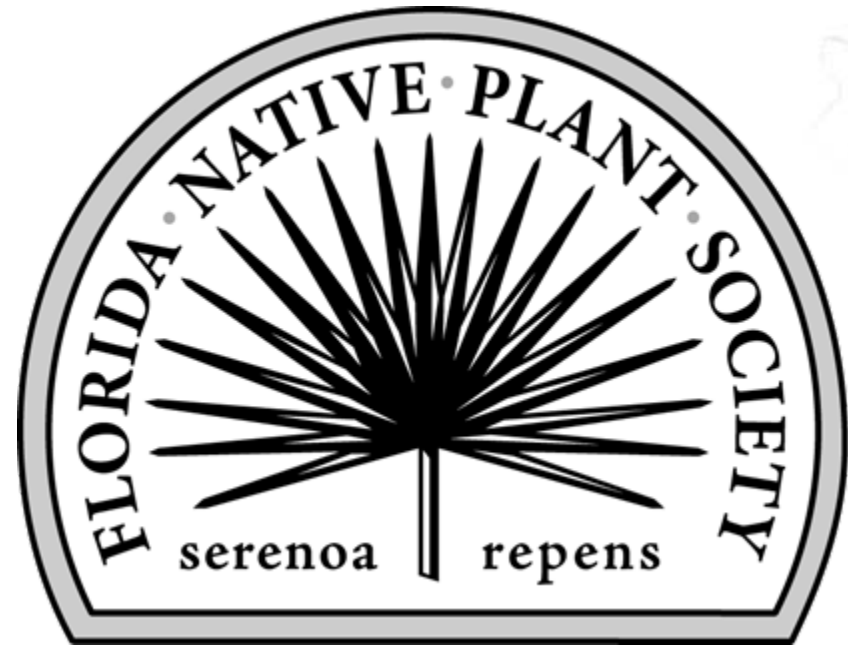


Florida Native Plant Society



Native Plant Owners Manual

Salvia coccinea – Tropical Sage

Mark Hutchinson

Putting things in perspective

All seasonal references are applicable to the eastern panhandle of Hernando County where the plants portrayed in this presentation grow. 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.

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](#)

Special thanks to Lucille Lane, Shirley Denton, Kari Ruder and Brooke Martin

Tropical Sage

Mint family



Salvia coccinea





Navigation Links

(for use in open discussion)

[What's in a Name?](#)

[Biological Classification – Tree of Life](#)

Where does this plant grow?

- [In North America](#)
- [In Florida](#)

What this plant needs to -

- [Thrive](#)
- [Pollinate](#)
- [Propagate](#)

[Life Cycle](#)

[References](#)

‘View/Full Screen Mode’
recommended

Throughout this
presentation, clicking
this symbol will return
you to this page.



Tropical Sage, blood sage, scarlet sage, rosy
sage, Texas sage, salvia

Salvia (SAL - vee - uh)

Derived from the Latin '*salvare*' - referring to helping, saving, or healing. In ancient times and the middle ages, various Sage were used for a myriad of medicinal purposes. From teas to compresses, its natural antiseptic qualities were used for ailments ranging from tooth ache to snake bite, to hot flashes. It was to the ancients what aspirin has become for modern man

coccinea (kok - SIN - ee - uh)

Latin for red or scarlet-dyed



Biological and Genetic Relationships

Salvia coccinea P.J. Buchoz ex Etlinger - blood sage

└─ *Salvia* L. - sage

└─ Lamiaceae (mint family)

Verbenaceae (verbena family)

Lentibulariaceae (bladderwort family)

Orobanchaceae (broomrape family)

Bignoniaceae (trumpet creeper family)

Scrophulariaceae (figwort family)

Calceolariaceae (slipper flowers)

Acanthaceae (acanthus family)

Gesneriaceae (gesneriad family)

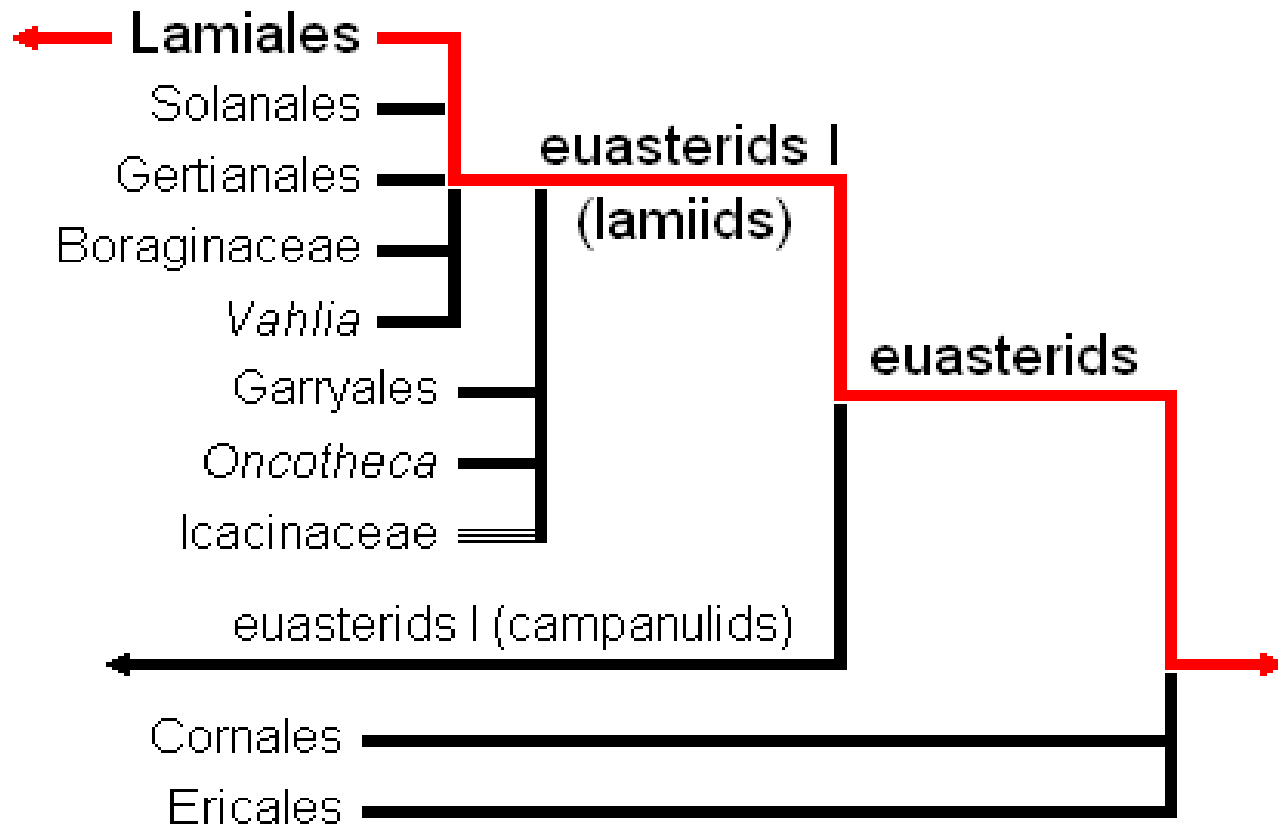
Oleaceae (olive family)

(Only Family names used for brevity)

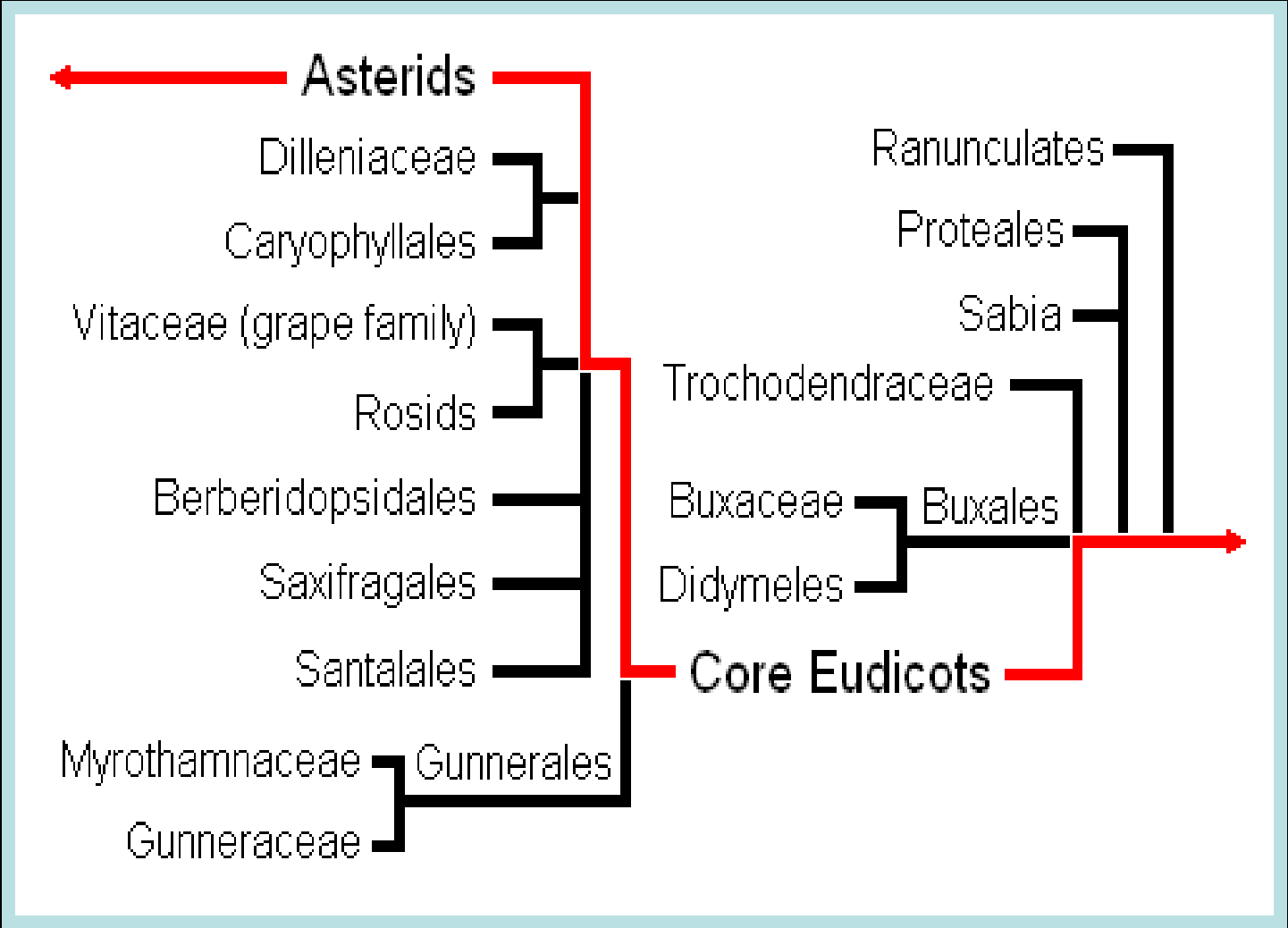
core Lamiales

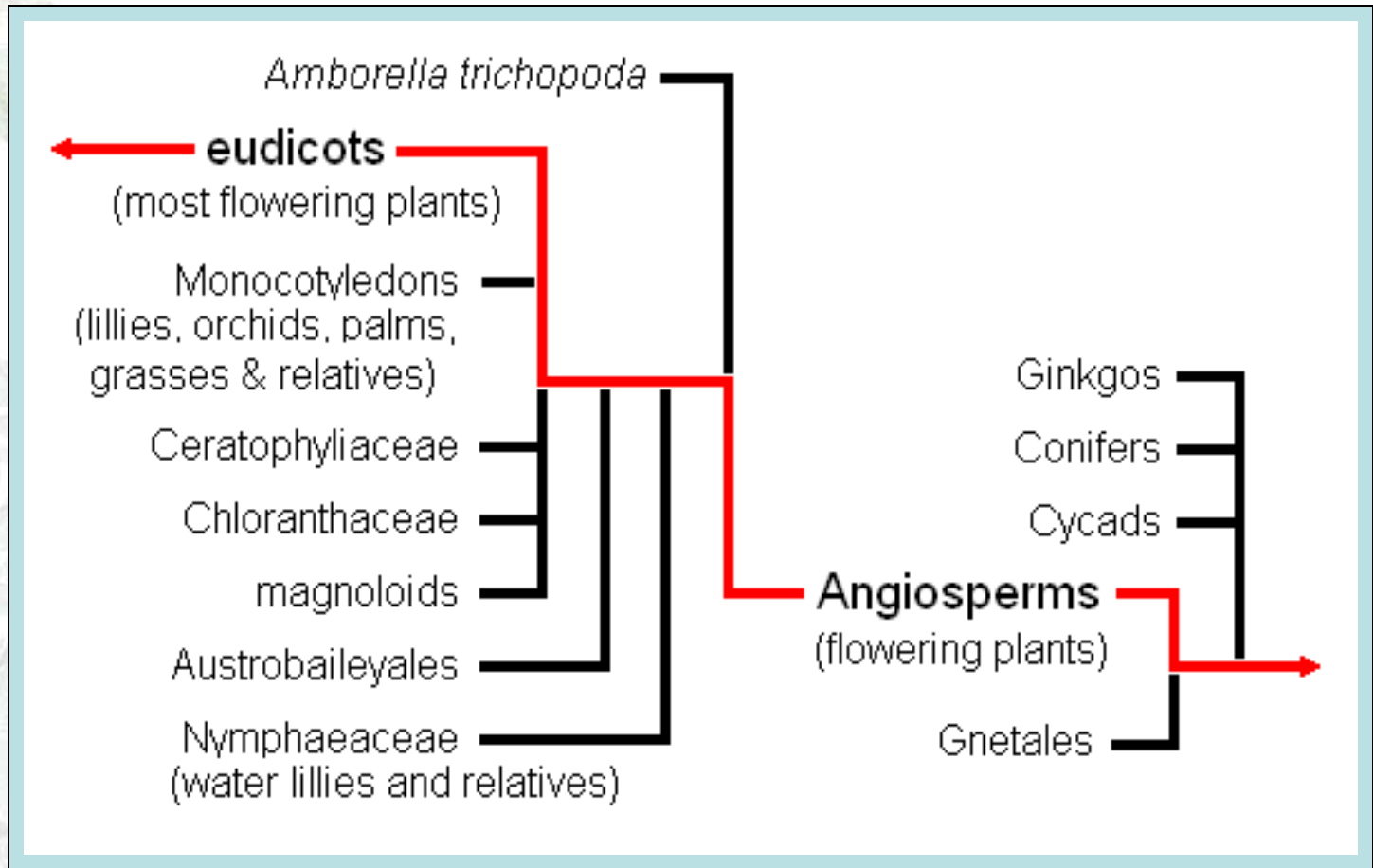
Each species is a leaf on the Tree of Life. Its genetic connections can be explored by following the branches (red line), towards the roots of life.





(Individual species and genus denoted by italics)



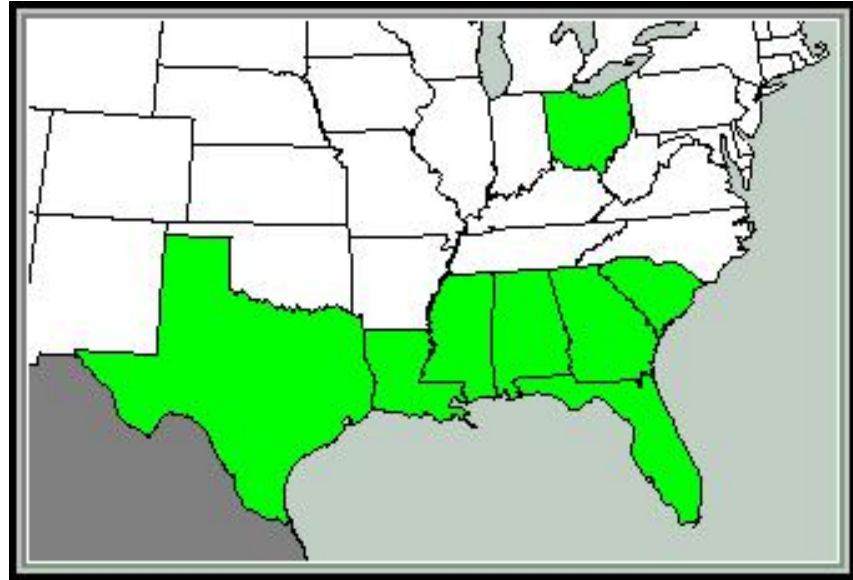


Link to the University of Arizona's [Tree of Life](#).



Species Distribution in the United States

Scarlet Sage, native to North America, occurs primarily in the southeastern portion of the United States. From southeastern Texas to the coastal counties of South Carolina. It is believed to have originated in Pre-Columbian Mexico, migrating to the southeast prior to European colonization.



(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.)



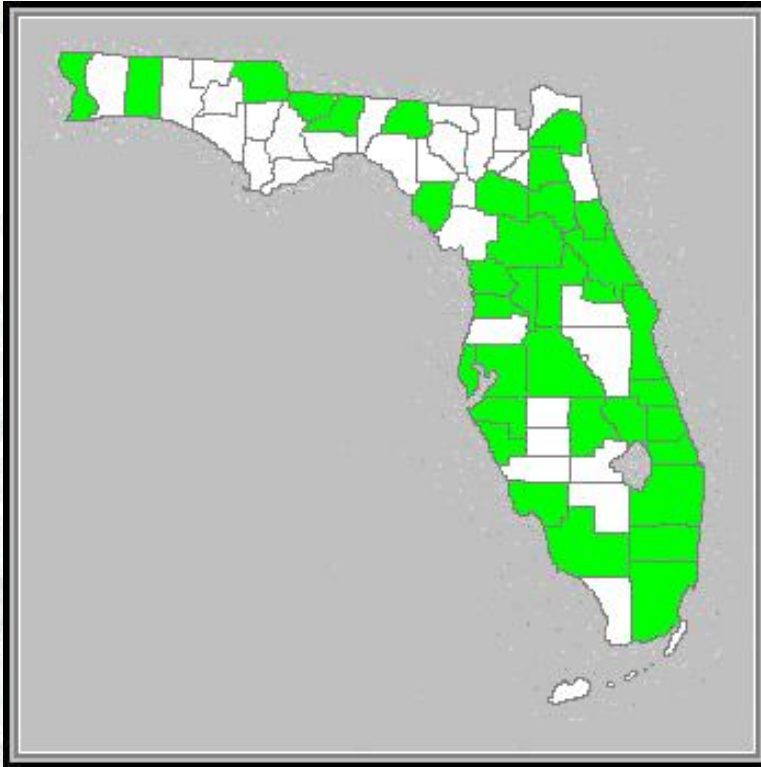


- The United States Department of Agriculture, NRCS, lists a total of 95 species of the genus *Salvia* L. throughout the U.S.
- The Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants identifies 10 species occurring in Florida, 8 of which are native.

University of Florida Herbarium
FLAS 210751 Alachua Co.,
11/13/2002



Species Distribution in Florida



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

- A perennial wildflower (although considered annual in colder areas), or subshrub, *Salvia coccinea* is *vouchered in approximately thirty-five Florida counties.
- Blood Sage is found in a variety of habitats preferring moist, sandy but rich soil.



Plant Structure and Life Cycle

This sometimes annual, sometimes perennial first emerges between March and May, distinguished by its spade, or deltoid shaped leaves with crenate edges.

Leaves have long petioles (leaf stems) opposite each other on a square primary stem. The leaves seem to grow smaller as this subshrub grows larger.





Salvia coccinea has a very shallow and diffuse, fibrous root system providing minimal anchorage for the plant. A brisk windstorm can leave many a plant inclined or leaning against it's neighbor.





As the plant matures, the flower clusters start to develop.





Scarlet Sage begins to bloom in spring and continues through till first frost, attracting butterflies, hummingbirds, and bumblebees to its tubular flowers. A prolific self-seeder, *Salvia coccinea* can quickly fill a flower bed if not monitored and thinned out when necessary.



Growing Conditions



to



- Full sun to partial shade

- Scarlet Sage prefers well-drained sandy to rich soil and is somewhat salt tolerant
- Acid to slightly alkaline soil— 5.5 to 7.5pH
- Fairly good drought tolerance
- Hardiness: USDA Zone 7b: to $-14.9\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$)
to USDA Zone 10b: above $1.7\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($35\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$)
- Flowering and seed production spring to first frost
- Height: 18-36 inch (36-90 cm)



Pollinators and Wildlife



Salvia coccinea is a must for any butterfly or hummingbird garden, both being well equipped to access the nectar deep in the trumpet shaped flowers.

The dense thickets created by tropical sage provide cover and protection for small birds and reptiles, helping to provide garden diversification.



Seed Collection & Propagation



Tropical Sage is a prolific self-seeder. Bagging the flowering head of its stems should be effective in capturing the seeds.

Due to *Salvia coccinea*'s propensity to reseed readily, established plantings will rejuvenate through self-seeding, sometimes needing to be cut back.



Presentation References

- Biological and genetic relationships

University of Arizona [Tree of Life](#)

- North American distribution

[USDA](#) - Natural Resource Conservation Service

- Florida distribution

[Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants](#)

- Nectar Food Plants

[Biospherenursery.com](#)



Presentation References (cont.)

- Growing conditions & general information

- [Floridata](#) *Salvia coccinea*
- [Wikipedia](#) Ornithophilous Plants
- [Wikipedia](#) *Salvia coccinea*
- [Dave's Garden](#)

- FNPS – Natives for Landscaping

[FNPS.org](#) This Link will take you to the profile for this plant on the FNPS website

- [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.

Florida Plants for Wildlife: A Selection Guide to Native Trees and Shrubs. Craig N. Huegel. 1995. Orlando: Florida Native Plant Society. ISBN 1885258046.

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

