

# Coreopsis

## *A WaterWise Perennials*

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One large category of plants for WaterWise Gardens are many of the plants that grow in US prairie habitats, primarily in the Midwest or the Southeast; some also grow in similar habitats in other parts of the world. Familiar garden plants from prairie habitats include coneflower (*Echinacea*), blanketflower (*Gaillardia*), *Rudbeckia*, and sunflowers (*Helianthus*)—all are good candidates for water efficient landscapes. These species are also members of the sunflower family, called Asteraceae.

Another member of this group is *Coreopsis*, known commonly as tickseed. Perhaps not the most inspiring of common names, this nickname for the genus refers to the shape of the seeds, which must have reminded someone of ticks. Most members of this genus have yellow flowers, others are gold or pink, but plant and leaf form vary considerably.

Several are commonly featured as garden perennials, including *Coreopsis verticillata* ‘Moonbeam’ and *C. grandiflora* ‘Sunray.’ These are among the approximately 35 different known species, of which most are native to the US. The genus is the state flower of Florida.

Let’s take a closer look at one of the species-- *Coreopsis verticillata* (whorled tickseed, threadleaf tickseed). It is native to the eastern part of the US all the way from Pennsylvania and New York to Florida and west to Arkansas. In nature it grows at wood edges and in Pine savannahs; both open habitats are similar to many garden settings. It has been grown in gardens for more than 100 years, and helps support wildlife through nectar and food sources for birds and insects. It grows relatively easy from seed, and established clumps can be divided to produce additional plants.



Photo on  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coreopsis\\_verticillata\\_0.4\\_R.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coreopsis_verticillata_0.4_R.jpg)  
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