

# **SUNSHINE MIMOSA; PUFFY PINK POWDERPUFF**

Native plants are very popular these days and those that serve a function in our landscapes are even more popular. Take the **sunshine mimosa** for example. This mimosa is a native of Florida and makes an excellent and attractive groundcover. Named as a “Plant of the Year” in 2008 by the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association, sunshine mimosa is a useful and beautiful plant.

**Powderpuff** or sunshine mimosa is a low-growing, spreading legume with feathery foliage and distinct one-inch long puffy pink flowers. The deep roots of this plant, and its ability to root along stems, makes it very drought tolerant once established. Erosion control is also a noted attribute of this plant. Sunshine mimosa is a fast grower and as few as five potted transplants can cover up to 300 square feet in less than one growing season.

Sunshine mimosa can be used in both residential and commercial settings as an alternative to turf or in roadside plantings. As a legume, it has the ability to fix nitrogen via its association with special nitrogen fixing bacteria. This ability can add nitrogen to the soil. Establishment can be accomplished with potted transplants, rooted sprigs, or even seeds. Seeds should be scarified (the seed coat

*(Continued on page 2)*



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thinned) before planting. The seed coat on sunshine mimosa is very hard and unscarified seed will take a year or more to germinate.

Sunshine mimosa is not very competitive and can be mixed with turf. Grass and mimosa can be mowed together without hurting the low-growing mimosa. The development of nitrogen-fixing bacteria may take more than a year to benefit these plants. While the use of a slow-release, no phosphorus fertilizer will delay or prevent the development of these nitrogen-fixing bacteria, its use will promote flowering and reduce yellowing. Relatively pest-free, sunshine mimosa can sometimes suffer from minor deer or caterpillar browsing.

*For more information about our Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, please contact our FYN Horticulture Program Assistant Allison Turner at 764.4351 or email [Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com](mailto:Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com).*

*Allison can help educate you about the FYN Program so you can create a beautiful, Florida-Friendly landscape that saves you time and money while conserving precious water resources and reducing pollution.*

### **CONTACT A MASTER GARDENER**

**on the Plant Lifeline from 1:00pm-4:00pm  
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at  
764.4340 or by email  
[Master.Gardener@charlottefl.com](mailto:Master.Gardener@charlottefl.com).**

**You can also visit them at one of our many  
Plant Clinics around the county:  
<http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu/PlantClinics.pdf>**

Where can you find a source of sunshine mimosa? The production of this plant is presently somewhat limited. Check local native plant nurseries and similar Internet sources. On occasion you might find some containerized material in local nurseries as well. Certainly, once you have a mimosa patch established, you can propagate your own new plants from this original stock.

To see a patch of sunshine mimosa in full bloom is an impressive sight. Try some as a ground-cover or alternative to turf for low maintenance areas.

#### *Resources:*

*- Norcini, J.G. & Aldrich, J.H. (2009) Native Wildflowers: Mimosa strigillosa Torr. & A. Gray. UF/IFAS Extension Service.*

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