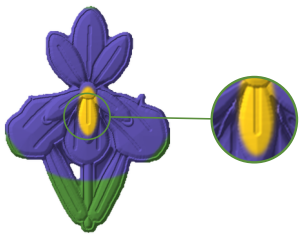
Native Flowers of Louisiana

PLA Time

Painting guide. Pictures are not to scale. Colors show how to paint each part.



Giant Blue Iris

Iris giganticaerulea

Petals · Stripe · Leaves

Louisiana's state wildflower and one of the Louisiana iris species. Grows in marshes and wetlands.

Main bloom: March–May



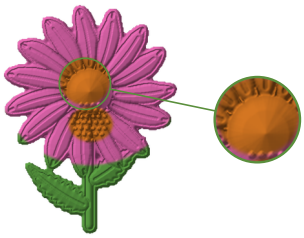
Maypop Passionflower

Passiflora incarnata

Petals · Fringe · Leaves

A vine with a white and lavender fringe banded in purple. Its egg-shaped fruit is a maypop.

Main bloom: May–October



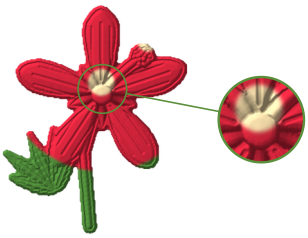
Purple Coneflower

Echinacea purpurea

Petals · Cone · Leaves

Drooping pink-purple petals around a spiky orange-brown cone. Birds eat the seeds.

Main bloom: May–August



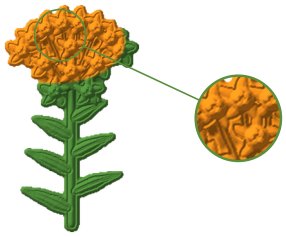
Scarlet Rosemallow

Hibiscus coccineus

Petals · Center · Leaves

A tall wetland hibiscus with huge red flowers. Each flower lasts a single day.

Main bloom: July–September



Butterfly Weed

Asclepias tuberosa

Flowers · Leaves

A milkweed that monarch caterpillars eat. Its sap is clear, not milky.

Main bloom: May–September



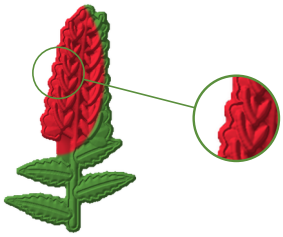
Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta

Petals · Center · Leaves

Golden petals around a dark brown dome. Bees visit, and birds eat the seeds.

Main bloom: May–October



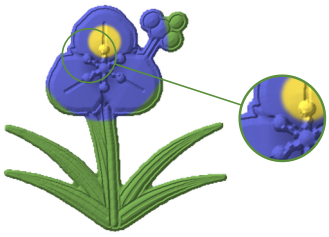
Cardinal Flower

Lobelia cardinalis

Flowers · Leaves

Grows beside streams and swamps. Hummingbirds are its main pollinators.

Main bloom: July–October



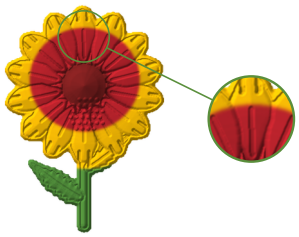
Ohio Spiderwort

Tradescantia ohiensis

Petals · Stamens · Leaves

Three blue-violet petals and long grass-like leaves. Each flower lasts about a day.

Main bloom: March–June



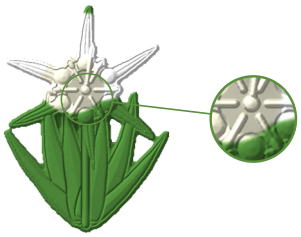
Indian Blanket

Gaillardia pulchella

Petal base · Petal tips · Center

Also called firewheel. Grows in sunny, sandy places and along the coast.

Main bloom: spring–summer



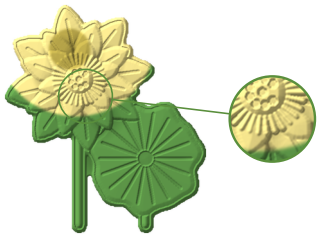
Gulf Coast Spiderlily

Hymenocallis liriosme

Petals · Cup · Leaves

Spidery white petals around a frilly cup that can be pale yellow-green. Grows in swamps and wet woods.

Main bloom: spring



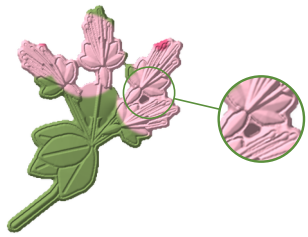
American Lotus

Nelumbo lutea

Petals · Leaf · Center

Round leaves up to two feet wide. Seeds grow in the holes of a flat-topped seed head.

Main bloom: June–September



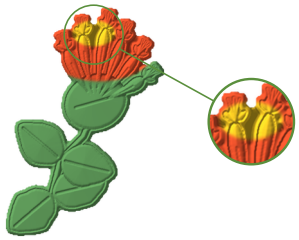
Hoary Azalea

Rhododendron canescens

Flowers · Stamens · Leaves

A wild azalea of Louisiana woods. Fragrant flowers open before the fuzzy leaves.

Main bloom: March–April



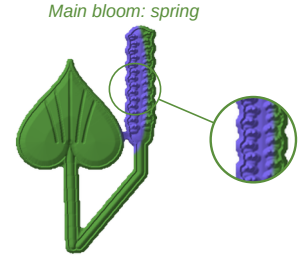
Coral Honeysuckle

Lonicera sempervirens

Flowers · Inside · Leaves

A climbing vine with red tube flowers. Hummingbirds visit, then red berries form.

Main bloom: March–June



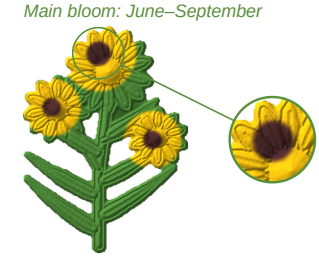
Pickerelweed

Pontederia cordata

Flowers · Leaf

Grows in shallow water. Each violet spike is packed with tiny flowers.

Main bloom: May–October



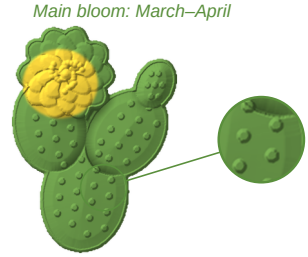
Swamp Sunflower

Helianthus angustifolius

Petals · Center · Leaves

Many small sunflowers on a tall stem. A late-season treat for bees and monarchs.

Main bloom: September–November



Eastern Prickly Pear

Opuntia humifusa

Flowers · Pads · Areoles

A native cactus. The flat green pads are stems. The dots are areoles, where tiny barbed bristles grow.

Main bloom: May–July

How to use this guide

Paint the big color areas first, then the flower centers and details. For extra depth, add a darker base coat, then brush lighter color over the raised details. Real flowers vary a lot in color, so treat these colors as a guide. Your flower's name is engraved on the flat underside.

Pictures show the 3D models, not real flowers. Circles show a close-up of one detail. Bloom times are for the Gulf South and vary with weather and place.

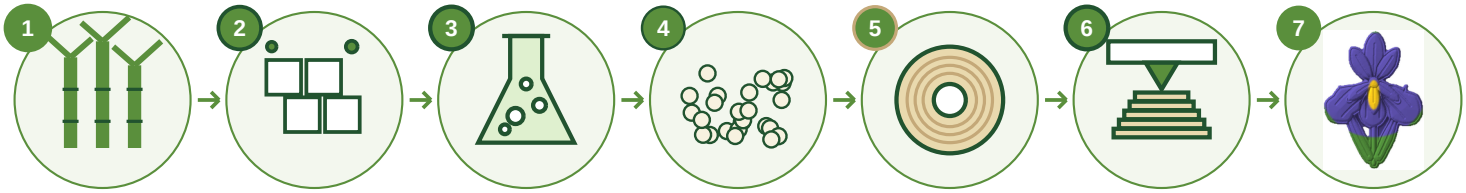
Made from plants

PLA Time

Your flower is printed in PLA, a plant-based plastic made from sugars from crops like corn and sugar cane.

From plant sugar to your flower

One way PLA is made. The sugar source depends on the filament maker.



1 Plants provide sugar
Crops such as corn and sugar cane provide the sugars used to make PLA.

2 Sugar is extracted
The plant sugar is cleaned and concentrated.

3 Microbes ferment it
Microorganisms ferment the plant sugar into lactic acid, also made in yogurt.

4 Acid becomes PLA
The lactic acid is processed into PLA plastic, in small pellets.

5 Pellets become filament
The pellets are melted and drawn into a thin thread wound on a spool.

6 Printed in layers
Our 3D printer melts the filament and lays it down one thin layer at a time.

7 Your flower
Your finished model, ready to paint.

What is PLA?

PLA stands for polylactic acid. It is a plant-based plastic usually made from sugars obtained from crops such as corn, sugar cane, or cassava. The exact source depends on the filament maker.

Microorganisms turn the plant sugar into lactic acid. Chemists link those molecules into long chains, and that is PLA. The plastic is solid at room temperature, melts at a low temperature, and sets quickly, which is why it works so well in 3D printers.

When you're done with it

Made from plants does not mean it melts away in the garden. PLA breaks down very slowly in backyard compost, landfills and outdoors. It can break down under controlled industrial-composting conditions, with sustained heat (about 131–140°F, or 55–60°C), moisture, oxygen, microorganisms and time.

These finished models have not been certified compostable, so please treat your flower like a keepsake. Paint it, display it, pass it on. Do not put it in backyard compost, curbside recycling or compost collection unless your local program specifically says it accepts it.

Painting your flower

- Wash it gently with warm soapy water and let it dry.
- A thin coat of primer helps paint stick, but acrylic craft paint also works directly on PLA.
- Start with the big color areas shown on the other side. Use thin coats and let each one dry.
- Add the flower center, stamens and leaf veins last, using a small brush.
- Finish with a clear matte sealer if you want the paint to last.

Caring for it

Standard PLA can soften and warp at about 131–149°F (it varies by brand), so keep your flower out of hot cars and direct summer sun. Louisiana summers are tough on PLA. Dust it with a soft brush, and handle the thin stems and petals gently.

About these flowers

These are native Louisiana plants, meaning they grew here naturally. Native flowers feed native bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, and many are host plants for caterpillars. If you plant natives, you help the wildlife that lives with them. Please leave wild flowers where they grow.

Did you know?

Sugar cane is a giant tropical grass that can grow taller than a person. Louisiana and Florida are the two leading sugar cane states in the U.S.

Lactic acid, the building block of PLA, is also produced during fermentation in foods like yogurt and sourdough bread.

The Louisiana iris is the official state wildflower of Louisiana.