

New name for a common Foamflower

The flowering plant previously known as Heartleaf Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) is now called Creeping Foamflower (*Tiarella stolonifera*) in some (but not all) locales. The new name emphasizes the fact that *Tiarella stolonifera* produces a leafy [stolon](#) (sometimes called a runner). *Tiarella stolonifera* sends out a creeping stolon after flowering but any given plant may or may not have a stolon (just like it may or may not have a flower). In any case, **all** plants known as *Tiarella stolonifera* have the ability to produce stolons by definition.

The name change has been accepted by [POWO](#), [VASCAN](#), and [Flora of the southeastern United States](#) (2022 edition). iNaturalist has supported [Tiarella stolonifera](#) since January 2022.

Since *Tiarella stolonifera* was [segregated](#) from *Tiarella cordifolia*, the latter name refers to a new taxon confined to the East Coast of the United States from Maryland to Georgia. Since the meaning of *Tiarella cordifolia* has changed, be careful to interpret legacy references correctly. If you see the qualified name *Tiarella cordifolia sensu stricto*, you know the writer is referring to the new taxon. Similarly, *Tiarella cordifolia sensu lato* refers to the old taxon. An unqualified name may refer to either taxon.

Identification

Three [morphological](#) characters are used to distinguish *Tiarella* species: 1) presence or absence of stolons; 2) size and shape of basal leaves; and 3) presence or absence of stem leaves. Both *Tiarella cordifolia sensu stricto* and *Tiarella stolonifera* have similar basal leaves and no stem leaves, but of the two, only the latter can produce a stolon. Since any given plant may or may not have a stolon, distinguishing the two can be very difficult. Altogether there are five species of *Tiarella* in eastern North America (two with stolons), so be careful. There's an [identification key in wikipedia](#) that will help distinguish *Tiarella* species.

Distribution

In eastern North America, at least one species of *Tiarella* occurs in each of 26 provinces and states. Multiple species of *Tiarella* occur in eight (8) states. *Tiarella stolonifera* occurs in 22 provinces and states, but it is the **only** species of *Tiarella* in 17 of those provinces and states (highlighted in color below).

For comparison, *Tiarella cordifolia sensu stricto* occurs in just five (5) states, all of which have at least two species of *Tiarella*. The ranges of *Tiarella cordifolia sensu stricto* and *Tiarella stolonifera* do not significantly overlap but are immediately adjacent along the Blue Ridge Mountains in western Virginia and western North Carolina.

	<i>Tiarella stolonifera</i>	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i> sensu stricto	Total # <i>Tiarella</i> spp.
Canada			
New Brunswick	Yes	No	1
Nova Scotia	Yes (S2S3)	No	1
Ontario	Yes	No	1
Quebec	Yes	No	1
United States			
Alabama	No	No	2
Connecticut	Yes	No	1
Georgia	No	Yes	4
Kentucky	Yes	No	2
Maine	Yes	No	1
Maryland	Yes	Yes	2
Massachusetts	Yes	No	1
Michigan	Yes	No	1
Mississippi	No	No	1
New Hampshire	Yes	No	1
New Jersey	Yes (S1)	No	1
New York	Yes	No	1
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	4
Ohio	Yes	No	1
Pennsylvania	Yes	No	1
Rhode Island	Yes	No	1
South Carolina	No	Yes	2

Tennessee	Yes	No	4
Vermont	Yes	No	1
Virginia	Yes	Yes	2
West Virginia	Yes	No	1
Wisconsin	Yes (S1)	No	1

(**S1** = Critically imperiled; **S2** = Imperiled; **S3** = Vulnerable)

An introduced population of *Tiarella* in Stearns County, Minnesota is claimed to be *T. stolonifera*.

References

Primary source:

- Nesom, Guy L. (2021). "[Taxonomy of *Tiarella* \(Saxifragaceae\) in the eastern USA](#)" (PDF). *Phytoneuron*. **31**: 1–61.

Foamflowers (*Tiarella*)

- <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/51644-Tiarella>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiarella>
- <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:30002940-2>

Creeping Foamflower (*Tiarella stolonifera*)

- <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/1351707-Tiarella-stolonifera>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiarella_stolonifera
- <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:77218782-1>

Heartleaf Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)

- <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/53789-Tiarella-cordifolia>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiarella_cordifolia
- <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:30175905-2>

October 2022

@trscavo