



## FLORIDA FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE GRANT REFERENCE INFORMATION

### How to Identify Native Plants for Landscape Use

“For most purposes, the phrase Florida native plant refers to those species occurring within the state boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best available scientific and historical documentation. More specifically, it includes those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impacts and alterations of the landscape.” Florida Native Plant Society

Native plants thrive in Florida’s sandy soils and provide shelter and food for birds, butterflies, and wildlife. Many native plants are ideally suited for low maintenance, naturalistic, or drought-tolerant landscapes. But knowing which natives to choose for a particular site can involve some research. For help, please consult:

Your local chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (In South Brevard, Conradina Chapter, 259-2813; in Central and North Brevard, Sea Rocket Chapter, 453-4865). To join the Florida Native Plant Society, write FNPS, P.O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902 or [www.FNPS.org](http://www.FNPS.org) Membership in the state organization automatically enrolls you in the appropriate local chapter.

FL. Native Plant nurseries: [RealFloridaGardeners@earthlink.net](mailto:RealFloridaGardeners@earthlink.net) 321-917-1960 [www.afnn.org](http://www.afnn.org)  
Maple Street Natives: 984-8320, 729-6857 email: [info@maplestreetnatives.com](mailto:info@maplestreetnatives.com) 7619 Henry Ave., W  
Melbourne, 32904

Web: [www.maplestreetnatives.com](http://www.maplestreetnatives.com) contact-Sharon Dolan

Naturewise: 536-1410 email [kari@naturewiseplants.com](mailto:kari@naturewiseplants.com) web: [www.naturewiseplants.com](http://www.naturewiseplants.com) 2295  
Adamson Rd., Cocoa, 32926

Contact- Kari Ruder

The following references available in your local library, bookstore, or nature center:

- Florida Native Plant Society publications such as *The Palmetto* quarterly or local chapter newsletter
- *Planting a Refuge for Wildlife*, Cerulean et al.
- *Growing Native*, Workman
- *Xeric Landscaping with Florida Native Plants*, Association of Florida Native Nurseries
- *Florida Wild Flower and Roadside Plants*, Bell & Taylor
- *Guide to Florida Wildflowers*, Taylor
- *Flowering Plants of Florida, A Guide to the Common Families*, Zomlefer

An excellent source of books and guides in South Brevard is the library at the Turkey Creek Nature Center, Palm Bay (off Port Malabar Boulevard next to the Palm Bay Community Center). Brevard County libraries have useful reference books also.



## Plants to Avoid

Florida's wonderful temperate climate encourages and supports the propagation and culture of plants from all over the world. Exotic plants from Mexico, Brazil, china, and other locales have become part of the Florida landscape. Many exotic plants grow so quickly and so well that we think of them as "natives." Some exotic plants are undesirable, however, because they are *invasive*-they "take over" in the landscape and crowd out other plants, including native plants, which support native birds and other wildlife. Exotic "pest" plants threaten the natural environment in many ways-the loss of species and habitat, the introduction of additional pest species (especially insects), and excessive consumption of water. The State of Florida is spending millions of taxpayer dollars every year trying to eradicate pest plants such a Brazilian pepper and Melaleuca trees, on land as well as water hyacinth and hydrilla in our waterways, and more!

We are just finding out which plants are pests and which are not. Unfortunately, many pest plants are widely propagated and sold commercially by nurseries. The following is a list of the more commonly sold and planted pests to be avoided:

Camphor tree (Cinnamomum camphora)	Firecracker plant (Russeila equisetiformis)
Oyster plant (Rhoeo spathecea)	Carrotwood (Cupaniopsis anacardioides)
Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica)	Mexican petunia (Ruellia tweediana )
Chinaberry (Melia azedarach)	Lantana (lantana camara)
Pittosporum (Pittosporum pentandrum)	Chinese tallow (Sapium sebiferum)
Mimosa (Mimosa pigra)	Privet (Ligustrum sinese)
Coral vine (Antigonon leptopus)	Night-blooming cereus (Cereus undatus)
Surinam cherry (Eugenia uniflora)	Earleaf acacia (Accacia auriculiformis)
Orchid tree (Bauhinia variegata)	Wedelia (Wedelia trilobata)

For a complete list, please contact, Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council database  
<http://www.fleppc.org>

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## Planting Natives in Brevard County

Because our county is so long, some plants will grow in South Brevard But not in North Brevard, and vice versa. Some plants that thrive on the mainland can't tolerate the salt on the beachside. Scrub plants won't grow in wet areas and marsh plants won't grow in dry scrub. But no matter where you live in the county, even in "disturbed urban areas," there are lovely native plants to choose from for your home landscape. Always be sure to consider your soil and light conditions, as well as salt tolerance if you live on the barrier island. The following are just a very few of the many plants that thrive in Brevard County. Trees are available in most local nurseries; for shrubs, flowering plants, vines, grasses, and groundcovers, look for nurseries specializing in natives.

### **Larger Trees**

Live Oak <i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Red Bay <i>Persea borbonia</i>
Loblolly Bay <i>Gordonia lasianthus</i>	Red Maple <i>Acer rubrum</i>
Long Leaf Pine <i>Pinus palustris</i>	Sand Pine <i>Pinus clausa</i>
Magnolia <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Water Oak <i>Quercus nigra</i>

### **Smaller Trees**

Dahoon Holly <i>Ilex cassine</i>	Southern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus silicicola</i>
Myrtle Oak <i>Quercus myrtifolia</i>	Turkey Oak <i>Quercus laevis</i>

### **Shrubs**

Beautyberry <i>Callicarpa Americana</i>	Firebush <i>Hamelia patens</i>
Buttonbush <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Gallberry <i>Ilex glabra</i>
Christmasberry <i>Lycium carolinianum</i>	Saw Palmetto <i>Serenoa repens</i>
Coral bean <i>Erythrina berbasea</i>	Wax Myrtle <i>Myrica cerifera</i>
Elderberry <i>Sambucus Canadensis</i>	Yaupon holly <i>Ilex vomitoria</i>

### **Flowering Plants**

Blanket flower <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	Golden aster <i>Pityopsis grannifolia</i>
Blazing star <i>Liatris species</i>	Goldenrod <i>Solidago species (various)</i>
Dotted Horsemint <i>Monarda punctata</i>	Sea oxeye daisy <i>Borrchia frutescens</i>
Dune sunflower <i>Helianthus debilis</i>	St. Johns wort <i>Hypericum species</i>

### **Vines**

Coral Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera sempervivens</i>	Railroad vine <i>Ipoioea pes-caprae</i>
Passionflower <i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	Seabean <i>Canavalia rosea</i>

### **Ornamental Grasses**

Elliot lovegrass <i>Eragrostis elliotti</i>	Saltmeadow cordgrass <i>Spartina patens</i>
Muhly grass <i>Muhlenbergia capillaries</i>	Wiregrass <i>Aristida stricta</i>

### **Groundcover**

Coontie <i>Zamia floridana</i>	Sunshine mimosa <i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>
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Note: plant sizes vary depending on how well plants adapt to your landscape.

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## **WHAT IS Florida Friendly Grant?**

Florida Friendly landscaping is using plants, shrubs, trees and grasses arranged according to their natural water needs. Florida Friendly is planning a landscape that emphasizes native, drought-tolerant plants to conserve water.

### **WHY Florida Friendly?**

Because you use plants with lower irrigation needs, you save water, which reserves a natural resource while saving you money. Half of the residential water consumption in Florida is for landscaping, and using Florida Friendly principles can reduce this figure by as much as 80%. Also, Florida Friendly landscapes need less weeding and less watering, which saves you time. Additionally, it is exciting to create a yard that accents Florida's native plant life.

### **HOW DO I GET STARTED?**

There are seven steps to Florida Friendly

1. **PLANNING AND DESIGN**—You need to understand the nature of your land, and its water supplies and demands. Choose plants based on this; the staff of your local nursery will be able to help you select shrubs, ground covers, and turf.
2. **WISE USE OF TURF**—Turf is the largest consumer of water in a landscape. Only use grass where practical, and focus instead on shrubs, ground covers, and walkways. Also, choose the shape of turf areas carefully; more perimeter equals more water needed.
3. **EFFICIENT IRRIGATION**—It is a common mistake to overwater your yard in order to satisfy the plants with highest water needs. If you use plants appropriate to your land, little or no irrigation is needed. Choose irrigation methods that fit each area of your yard, and only use as much water as necessary. Good methods include bubblers and drip systems.
4. **SOIL ANALYSIS**—Before planting have your soil analyzed to determine if it needs improvement.
5. **MULCH**—Mulch limits weed growth, reduces evaporation from the soil surface, and retains moisture in the root zone. Mulches like pine straw, wood shavings, and eucalyptus mulch are attractive alternatives to turf around and between shrubs and trees.
6. **PROPER PLANT SELECTION**—Look for the Xeriscape™ tag at your nursery; it will tell you what a plant's water needs are. Ask your local water management district office for a guide to appropriate plants for your area. Remember that different grasses have different water needs, too, so choose your turf wisely.



7. APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE—With less lawn area and lower irrigation needs, your Xeriscape™ ground requires less maintenance than a traditional landscape. Regular pruning, weeding, pest control, and fertilization also help your plants use water most efficiently.

## **Landscaping Medians and Rights-of-Way**

Before undertaking a landscape project targeted toward street medians, rights-of-way, or entryways to subdivisions, there are various important issues to consider:

- Ownership of the property to be landscaped (private, municipal, county, state?)
- Presence of utilities above or below ground (electric, telephone, water/sewer)
- Conflict with existing maintenance routines (moving, trimming, repaving)
- Drainage and run-off requirements (periodic flooding)
- Liability and selection of plantings (attractive, low maintenance, human-friendly)

All of these concerns can make it complicated, tedious, and time-consuming to obtain the formal approvals needed for a median or right-of-way landscaping project. The approval process can be daunting for the newcomer but is achievable if approached properly. But be forewarned that having a project reviewed and approved, and obtaining the necessary letters of authorization and/or permits, *can take several weeks and involve communications with many different individuals and organizations.*

Your first step is to identify the ownership of and jurisdiction over the area to be landscaped—who is responsible for maintaining the area and who would be liable for any problems that might arise? Obtain answers to the following questions:

- If the area private, belonging to a development company, homeowner's group, or other association? Generally, this is the case for entryways to subdivisions, apartment complexes, shopping centers, and so forth.
- If the area municipal, belonging to a city? Generally, residential streets are maintained by their respective cities.
- Is the area county, state, or federal property? Major roads and highways fall into this category and may require approval from Brevard County or from the State Department of Transportation (D.O.T.).

In each case, a different approval process will be required and different criteria will apply to your project. Be prepared for surprises, such as no trees in the median (presents a liability concern). City and county development and planning departments can advise you on their specific requirements, as can the D.O.T. for areas considered state and federal property. Brevard County and many cities apply the D.O.T. criteria and restrictions, which you can learn about by contacting the local D.O.T. construction office



at 321-690-3241 and requesting their free publications “Planting in the Right-of-Way” and “Landscaping in the Medians.”

Perhaps the easiest and most expedient way to proceed with such a project is to hire one of the many landscape architects who specialize in rights-of-way and median landscaping projects. These professionals already know how to design plans that meet the requirements and restrictions of different government organizations, which present no problems for utility or drainage engineers, and which result in a few maintenance or liability concerns. Involving an expert during the planning and approval stage will result in everyone being happy with a plan that you can then implement. Be sure to select a landscape architect who is not only familiar with rights-of-way and median landscape requirements, but is also knowledgeable about Periscope concepts and the use of Florida native plants.

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## **Recommended Maintenance Plan for Trees**

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year after Planting

#### WATERING

- Place a rain gauge on site to measure rainfall amounts.
- In well-draining soils, water deeply (which is one inch of water covering the entire area underneath the drip-line) daily. Do this for approximately six months for every one inch of tree trunk diameter or until the tree is established. The tree is considered established when the tree has produced a large enough root system to promote new growth. An irrigation system (either permanent or temporary) or a portable sprinkler attached to a hose is best to use for watering versus hand-watering. Determine the length of time the sprinklers need to be running to apply one inch of water by placing tuna fish or cat food cans under the trees canopy and measuring the water.
- Once the tree is established, a deep watering is only needed every 3-4 weeks during dry periods (which is less than one inch of rain per storm or no rain at all.)
- Watch for signs of water stress which is brown leaf margins that work into the leaf or brown leaf tips that work down into the leaf. In well-draining soils and a lack of big rain storms that apply a minimum of an inch of rain per storm, then assume the water stress is caused by not enough water and shorten the watering intervals to every 1-2 weeks. Too much watering can also cause the dead leaf margins or leaf tips but in well-draining soils this will not normally occur even with large storms occurring on a continual basis.

#### MULCHING



- For each inch of trunk diameter, create a minimum of a two foot radius mulch ring. (This is because competition from grass, weeds and other plants can reduce new growth by up to 50%.)
- Monitor the mulch every six months to keep the mulch 3-4 inches thick.
- At least twice a year, monitor the tree as it grows and enlarge the mulch ring out to the drip-line.

#### FERTILIZING

- Do not apply any fertilizer until the tree is established and has begun producing new foliage.
- Do not apply any fertilizer until a soil test has been done for pH, phosphorous, potassium, magnesium and calcium. Soil test forms, bags and mailing box can be picked up at either Extension office in Cocoa (633-1702) or Palm Bay (952-4536). The cost of the test is \$7 per sample.
- Fertilizer should only be applied if supplemental water can be provided.
  
- For palms follow these recommendations:
  - Never use turf fertilizer within 50 feet of any palm.
  - Palms will do best with an 8-2-12 4%Mg or 8-4-12 4%Mg.
  - Palms normally have deficiencies that are similar to those of grasses so, if you need to fertilize palms that are planted in (or near) turf it is best to fertilize everything (the turf too) with 8-2-12 4%Mg or 8-4-12 4% Mg.
  - When fertilizing, broadcast the fertilizer using a calibrated rotary spreader under the palm canopy area, the entire bed area or the entire landscape at a maximum rate of 15 pounds of fertilizer (that is the total fertilizer blend) per 1000 square feet every three months. Or, 1.5 pounds per 100 square feet every three months.

#### PEST CONTROL

- Monitor the trees and palms for any evidence of insect problems. If sooty mold is present spray the foliage, both sides and get thorough coverage, with an Insecticidal Soap or a Ultra-fine Pesticidal Oil.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year After Planting

##### WATERING

- Continue to water the trees deeply every 3-4 weeks during dry periods (which is less than one inch of rain per storm or no rain at all.)
- Watch for signs of water stress which is brown leaf margins that work into the leaf or brown leaf tips that work down into the leaf. In well-draining soils and a lack of big rain storms that apply a minimum of an inch of rain per storm then assume the water stress is caused by not enough water shorten the watering intervals to every 1-2 weeks. Too much water can also cause the



dead leaf margins or leaf tips but this is more likely to occur in low-lying areas with poor drainage and not in well-draining soils.

#### MULCHING

- Monitor the mulch every six months to keep the mulch 3-4 inches thick.
- At least twice a year, monitor the tree as it grows and enlarge the mulch ring out to the drip-line.

#### FERTILIZING

- If a soil test has been performed continue to follow the recommendations if there is supplemental water available. Repeat soil testing every 2-3 years for pH and nutrients.
- Continue to fertilize the palms four times a year with the fertilizer analyses mentioned earlier.

#### PEST CONTROL

Continue to monitor for insect problems and treat as needed.