



LANDSCAPING WITH FLORIDA NATIVE PLANTS

Presented by Kimberly Gibbs

On behalf of
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Merritt Island, Florida

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What is a Florida “native” plant?

A "**Florida native plant**" refers to a species occurring within the state boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best available scientific and historical documentation.

Florida native plants include those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impacts and alterations of the landscape.“

Source: <https://www.fnps.org/natives/definition>

Benefits of landscaping with native plants

Conservation of water and other resources

Maintenance and improvement of water quality

Honoring our heritage

Providing habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Pollinators and other insects are incredibly dependent on native plants.

Source: <https://www.fnps.org/natives/definition>

Benefits of landscaping with native plants

AUTHENTIC FLORIDA LANDSCAPES
ARE
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
AND
SUPPORT NATIVE WILDLIFE

Non native Introduced Plants

1. Turf grass lawn
2. non-native plants there are not invasive
3. non-native plants that are invasive

Non-Native, Alien, Introduced or Exotic --

A plant whose natural range does not include Florida. These species may have been introduced intentionally or accidentally

Invasive Plant

A plant that grows so profusely that it takes over – escapes cultivation and alters native plant communities.

Being non-native does not mean that a plant is invasive.

Common Non Native Landscape Plants



Invasive Non Native Plants



Invasive Non Native Plants

Learn more about invasive plants at the Florida Invasive Species Council

<https://www.floridainvasives.org/>

<https://www.floridainvasives.org/plant-list/2023-invasive-plant-species/>

Landscaping Tip

Right Plant Right Place

Canopy Trees 40-plus feet tall

WATER REQUIREMENTS	COMMON NAME (<i>SCIENTIFIC NAME</i>)
DRIER TO AVERAGE	<p>gumbo limbo (<i>Bursera simaruba</i>) **</p> <p>pignut hickory (<i>Carya glabra</i>)</p> <p>slash pine (<i>Pinus elliotii var. densa</i>) **</p> <p>live oak (<i>Quercus virginiana</i>) **</p>
MOIST TO WET	<p>red maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i>)</p> <p>strangler fig (<i>Ficus aurea</i>) – large acreage sites only; naturalized areas</p> <p>southern magnolia (<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>) **</p> <p>water oak (<i>Quercus nigra</i>)</p> <p>laurel oak (<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>)</p> <p>cabbage palm (<i>Sabal palmetto</i>) * and **</p>

* Palm ** hurricane wind resistant

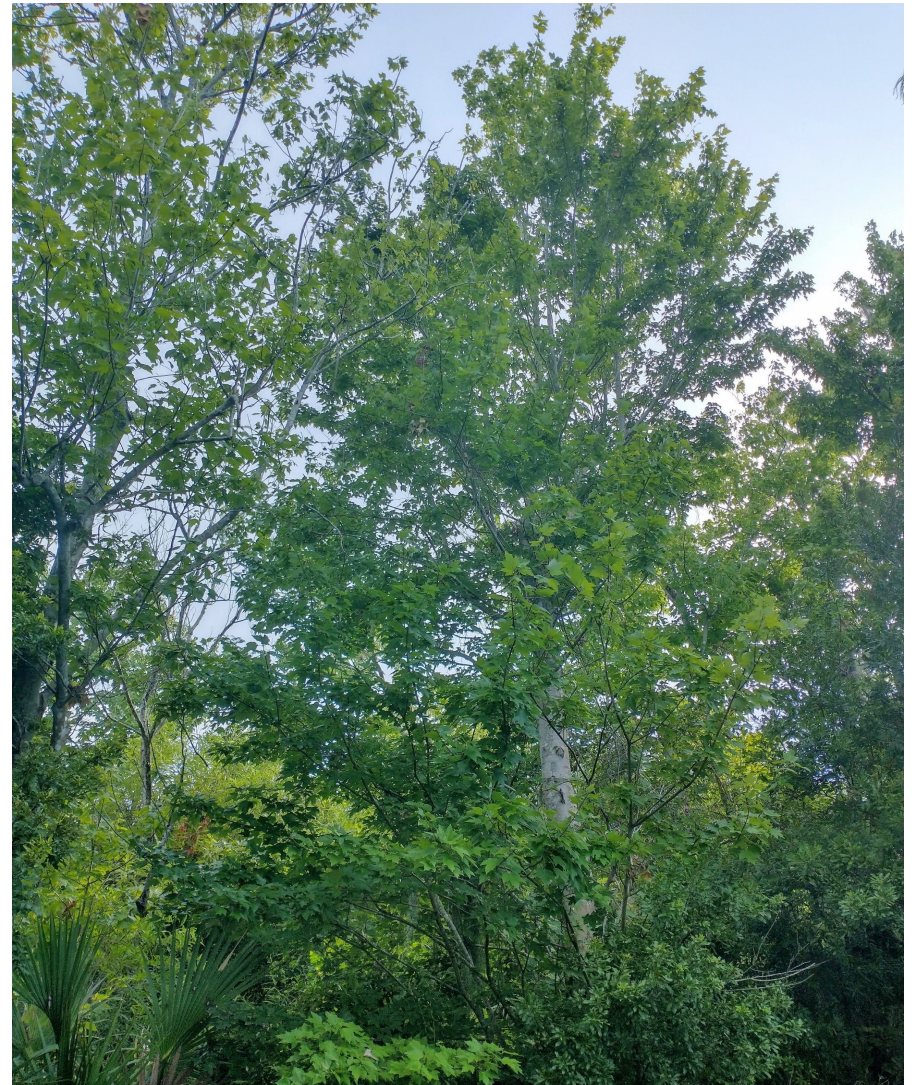
red maple

(*Acer rubrum*)

Mature Height: 45 to 50 feet tall

Shade or fall color tree for moist areas.

Deciduous. Blooms in winter



red maple

(*Acer rubrum*)



Gumbo limbo

(Bursera simaruba)

Size: 20-30(60) feet tall

Interesting bark. Hurricane wind resistant.



pignut hickery

(*Carya glabra*)

Size: 30-100 feet tall

Excellent specimen or shade tree where
its roots will not be disturbed



Slash pine

(*Pinus elliottii* var. *densa*)

Size: 80-100 (120) feet tall

Interesting foliage.



live oak

(*Quercus virginiana*)

Size: 40 to 80 feet tall

Large specimen tree or shade tree



Tip: Leave the Leaves

Fallen leaves are called “leaf litter” and offer many benefits to the soil and native wildlife.

Many beneficial invertebrates live in leaf litter.

Some moths and butterflies spend all or part of their lives in leaf litter.

These animals are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem.

The polyphemus moth pictured here on a wild coffee plant came from oak leaf litter. On Merritt Island, look for these moths near the leaf litter in February and March.

Rake the leaves into shrub beds instead of discarding.



Pruning Tip: Ensure proper tree pruning

- Hire a qualified arborist to prune high value specimen trees

<https://www.treesaregood.org/findanarborist/findanarborist>

Cabbage palm

(Sabal palmetto)

Size: to 100 feet tall

Evergreen. Blooms spring-summer.



Palm Pruning Tip: Avoid Over Pruning

- Avoid “hurricane” pruning and other over pruning techniques
- Hire a qualified tree pruner
- Search online “How to prune a cabbage palm” and “:IFAS” (UF/Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences)



Photos by Bill Klein



A healthy cabbage palm with full crown



Small Trees 20 to 40 feet tall

WATER REQUIREMENTS	COMMON NAME (<i>SCIENTIFIC NAME</i>)
DRIER TO AVERAGE	seagrape (<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>) red cedar (<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> var. <i>silicicola</i>) red mulberry (<i>Morus rubra</i>) simpson stopper (<i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i>) sand live oak (<i>Quercus geminate</i>) sweet acacia (<i>Vachellia farnesiana</i>)
MOIST TO WET	pond apple (<i>Annona glabra</i>) buttonwood (<i>Conocarpus erectus</i>) dahoon holly (<i>Ilex cassine</i>) American elm (<i>Ulmus americana</i>)

*

Sand live oak

(*Quercus geminata*)

Size: 20-30 feet

Specimen tree, shade tree. Thicket in dry sandy areas.



Dahoon holly

(*Ilex cassine*)

Size: 20-30 feet tall

Performs best in wetland site

Evergreen. Showy fruits. Interesting foliage.



Plants 5 to 20 feet tall

(shrubs, ferns, grasses)

PLANT COMMON NAME (SCIENTIFIC NAME)

false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*)

marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*)

salt bush (*Baccharis halimifolia*)

American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)

fiddlewood (*Citharexylum spinosum*)

Florida privet (*Forestiera segregata*)

firebush (*Hamelia patens*)

Simpson's stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans*)

wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*)

myrsine (*Myrsine cubana*)

wild coffees – shiny coffee and velvetleaf coffee (*Psychotria nervosa* and *Psychotria sulzneri*)

Jamaica caper (*Quadrella jamaicensis*)

Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)

elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* subsp. *Canadensis*)

necklace pod (*Sophora tomentosa*)

Walter's viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*)

American beautyberry

(*Callicarpa americana*)

Size: 4-8 feet tall

Showy flowers. Showy fruits.



fiddlewood

(*Citharexylum spinosum* syn.
fruticosum)

Size: 12-25 feet tall

Aroma. Fragrance. Showy flowers.



firebush

(*Hamelia patens*)

Size: to 20 feet tall

Showy flowers.



firebush

(*Hamelia patens*)

Butterflies. Noted for
attracting zebra longwings.



wax myrtle

(*Myrica cerifera*)

Size 10-15 (20) feet tall

Evergreen. Fragrant foliage.



myrsine

(*Myrsine cubana*)

Size: 8-15 (30) feet tall

Evergreen. Interesting foliage.

Narrow in form.



shiny-leaf wild coffee

(*Psychotria nervosa*)

Size: 2 to 6 feet tall

Showy flowers. Showy fruit.

Interesting foliage.



velvet leaf wild coffee

(*Psychotria sulzneri*)

Size: 3 to 4 feet tall

Evergreen. Blooms and fruits year round.

Showy fruits. Interesting foliage.



Saw palmetto

(*Serenoa repens*)

Size: 3-8 (15) feet tall

Evergreen. Blooms spring to summer.

Showy flowers. Fragrant.

Interesting foliage.



giant leather fern

(*Acrostichum danaeifolium*)

Size: 6-12 feet tall

Specimen plant or mass background
plant in moist/wet areas.



Plants under 5 feet tall

(Grasses, Ferns, Herbaceous Flowers, Groundcovers and Vines)

PLANT COMMON NAME (SCIENTIFIC NAME)

Coontie palm

Grasses: bluestems , bluestems, sand cordgrass, muhly grass

Dotted horsemint - *Monarda punctata*

Ferns: **swamp fern**, cinnamon fern, shield fern

Vines: **Passion Vine** and **Corkystem passion-flower**

Herbaceous flowers:

Goldenrod, spiderwort tropical sage - Scarlet sage, Leavenworth's tickseed

Silkgrass, dune sunflower, spider lily

Groundcovers: sunshine mimosa, frogfruit, blue-eyed grass

swamp fern

(*Telmatoblechnum
serrulatum* (syn.
Blechnum serrulatum)

Size: 2 to 3 feet tall

Ground cover for moist shady sites.



Passion vine;

maypop

(*Passiflora incarnata*)

Showy flowers. Showy fruits. Interesting foliage.

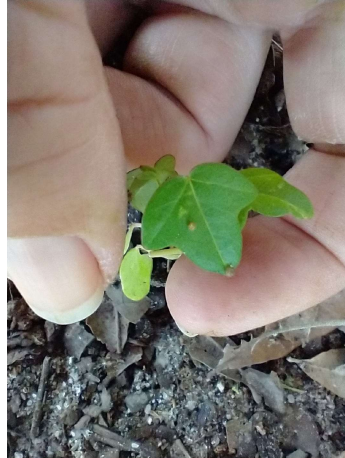


Corkystem passionvine

(*Passiflora suberosa*)

Not showy. Commonly found growing
under the shade of oak trees.

Larval host for many butterflies including
Gulf fritillary and Zebra longwing.



Passionvine supports native butterflies

Both *Passiflora incarnata* and *Passiflora suberosa* are larval hosts for many butterflies, including the Gulf fritillary and the Zebra longwing butterflies.



Where to buy native plants?

Wild Wet N Wacky Florida Native Plants

1380 D'albora Rd Merritt Island FL

Email: wildwetnwacky@gmail.com

Web: www.wildwetnwacky.com

Florida Native Plant Society – Sea Rocket Chapter

Monthly plant sales are held during spring and fall. Contact chapter for details.

Enchanted Forest Sanctuary Titusville FL

Email: srsecretary@fnps.org

Web: <https://searocket.fnpschapters.org/>

Change of Greenery

Melbourne, FL

Email: ChangeOfGreeneryFL@gmail.com

Web: www.changeofgreenery.org

Native Butterfly Flowers LLC

West Melbourne FL Email: nativebutterflyflowers@gmail.com

Web: <https://nativebutterflyflowers.com/Melbourne>

Outside Brevard? Find a native plant nursery at www.PlantRealFlorida.org and www.FANN.org

Resources for this presentation

- Florida Native Plant Society
Plant profiles available at **FNPS.org**
- Atlas of Florida Plants: <https://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/>
- Dr. Doug Tallamy books: *Bringing Nature Home*; *The Nature of Oaks*; *Nature's Best Hope*
- Dr. Ginny Stibolt books: *The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape*; *A Step-by-Step Guide to a Florida Native Yard*