



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS EXTENSION

Native Landscape Plants for South Florida¹

Jody Haynes, John McLaughlin and Laura Vasquez²

Introduction

Native plants were once thought of by many Florida gardeners, nurserymen, and landscapers as being appropriate only for informal gardens or in highly specific and often difficult garden situations, such as boggy or coastal areas (Osorio, 2001). Because of this negative (mis)perception, native plants have often received a "bad rap" in Florida. In recent years, however, the attributes of native plants have been increasingly recognized and appreciated - especially in central and north Florida.

The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FYN) program has been encouraging the use of Florida-friendly landscaping principles in south Florida since February 2000. FYN does not restrict its recommendations to native plants, but rather recommends putting the right plant in the right place. South Florida natives, by their very nature, are generally well adapted to the nutrient-poor, alkaline, and sand- or limestone-based soils of south Florida. They also have relatively low fertilizer requirements, few pest and disease problems, and typically do not

require frequent maintenance -- such as regular watering, pruning, or spraying -- to remain healthy and maintain an acceptable aesthetic quality. It is also important to note here that not all native plants have the same requirements, and any plant put in the wrong place may either present problems or require more maintenance.

A previous publication, ENH854 (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP107>), listed over 350 native and non-native plant species for south Florida. This new publication was developed as a supplement to ENH854, but it is also a good stand-alone reference for people wishing to add native plants to their private yards or public landscapes, or simply to learn more about them.

Benefits of Native Plants

While south Florida's native plants may not offer the striking floral displays of some tropical exotics, many do possess attractive foliage or colorful fruits. Often they can add a pleasing form or texture to the landscape. South Florida has a wide variety of native

1. This document is ENH 875, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date April 29, 2003. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. **Jody Haynes**, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program Extension Agent, Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/Miami-Dade County Extension, Homestead, FL, e-mail jlh@mail.ifas.ufl.edu phone (305) 248-3311 x246.

John McLaughlin, Urban Horticulture Program Assistant, Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/Miami-Dade County Extension, Homestead, FL, e-mail johnmcl@mail.ifas.ufl.edu phone (305) 248-3311 x228.

Laura Vasquez, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program Assistant, Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/Miami-Dade County Extension, Homestead, FL, e-mail lvasquez@mail.ifas.ufl.edu phone (305) 248-3311 x245

Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611

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plants that are both attractive and useful as landscape plants. The species listed herein grow well in urban landscape settings in part or all of south Florida without much fuss - assuming they are planted in the right place in the landscape. In addition to being interesting additions to urban yards and landscapes, native plants also increase the diversity of natural insect predators. Many are also attractive to other types of sought-after wildlife species (*i.e.*, birds and butterflies).

Finding and Using Native Plants in South Florida

Although it is not difficult to find native plants in local garden centers, the range of species is usually extremely limited, particularly compared to the great number of exotic species available. With many local ordinances requiring an increasing percentage of native plants in new landscapes, it is becoming increasingly important that more native species be made available to the public. We have created a list of retail and wholesale nurseries in south Florida that sell native plants. If you are interested in this list, you can either download the pdf from the publications section of our website, <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/publications.htm> (it is the last entry under "Trees and Landscape Plants" in our list of in-house publications), or call or e-mail us and we will send you a free copy (our contact information is given in footnote 2).

County-Specific Soil Conditions

Much of south Florida is similar with respect to climate and other growing conditions. Therefore, most of the plants on this list should be widely applicable throughout the region. However, once you pass from the sandy soils of Palm Beach, Broward, and northern Miami-Dade County into the alkaline rockland type soils of central and southern Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, the landscape environment changes dramatically, and this can affect the ability to grow certain species. Add to that the appearance of pockets of marl soil and the varying types of fill soils that can be found in urban areas, and the issue of soil compatibility becomes increasingly important. For example, buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*) will not grow well in marl soil, but excels in

limestone soils. Conversely, butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) will not grow well in the alkaline limestone of south Miami-Dade home landscapes, but performs quite well in the sandy areas in north Miami-Dade and further north. When applicable, we will include notes on soil preference for particular species.

Native Plant Categories

The 135 native plant species listed in this publication are grouped according to their functions in the landscape. Separate tables are provided for the following categories: wildflowers (Table 1); shrubs and small trees (Table 2); medium and large trees (Table 3); palms and our single native cycad (Table 4); ornamental grasses, ferns, and groundcovers (Table 5); and vines (Table 6). Each entry includes the common name, scientific name, maximum size, light preference, salt tolerance, distinguishing characteristics, and culture recommendations.

Native Plant Resources

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Table 1. Native wildflowers for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (inches)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Butterfly weed * <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	18-36	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Perennial wildflower with orange summertime flowers. Essential component of a butterfly garden. Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Prefers sandy soil; will not grow well in alkaline limestone soil.
Seaside oxeye * <i>Borrchia arborescens</i>	2-4	Full sun	High	Upright plant with yellow daisy-like flowers. Widely used on banks and slopes. Excellent for beach-front plantings in sand. Requires freely draining soil to prevent root rot.
Silver oxeye * <i>Borrchia frutescens</i>	2-4	Full sun	High	Similar to <i>B. arborescens</i> , but with silvery foliage and a less upright stature.
Tickseed <i>Coreopsis leavenworthii</i>	18-36	Full sun	Low	Florida's state wildflower. Tall, fast growing stems terminate in yellow flowers with brown/black centers. Forms large patches by self-seeding, but will die back in the winter.
Twinflower * <i>Dyschoriste oblongifolia</i>	8-12	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Small, sprawling perennial that forms a groundcover by underground rhizomes and seeds. Delicate stems bear small purple flowers.
Yellowtop * <i>Flaveria linearis</i>	24-48	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Erect to sprawling perennial with large clusters of tiny yellow flowers throughout summer. Vigorous and easy to grow, but cannot tolerate wind exposure.
Indian blanket <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	12-24	Full sun	High	Colorful annual or short-lived perennial. As easily grown as it is beautiful. Considerable variation in flower color; typical variety bears red flowers with yellow-tipped petals. Plant in open site with good drainage.
Rain lilies * <i>Habranthus</i> spp.	24-48	Full sun	Moderate	Flowers yellow, pink, red or white, produced spring and summer after rain. Goes dormant in cool season, requiring very little water. Flowers best when crowded.
Beach sunflower * <i>Helianthus debilis</i>	36-48	Full sun	High	Erect or prostrate, spreading plant with sandpaper-like leaves and 2.5- to 3-inch yellow sunflowers. Suitable for beach-front plantings. Good for attracting butterflies.
Pineland heliotrope <i>Heliotropium polyphyllum</i>	6-12	Full sun to partial shade	High	Sparse, partly erect or prostrate perennial composed of thin stems that arch at the top and bear tiny yellow flowers along the top side. Slowly forms large patches in cultivation.
Pineland lantana <i>Lantana depressa</i>	24-48	Full sun	High	Low, sprawling, woody shrub with small, yellow flowers that attract a variety of butterflies. Beware of the invasive <i>L. camara</i> .
Pennyroyal <i>Piloblephis rigida</i>	6-24	Full sun	Low	Low-growing perennial. Not picky about soil, but likes it dry. Small, shrimp-like flowers emerge from green, scale-like bracts. Attractive to butterflies.

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Silkgrass * <i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>	24-36	Full sun	Low	Perennial, grass-like herbaceous plant with silvery, silky stems, grass-like basal leaves, and small, terminal yellow flowers.
Black-eyed Susan * <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	24-36	Full sun to light shade	Low	Typical daisy-like annual or short-lived perennial (depending on variety), with large, yellow-orange to reddish-orange flowers with darker centers. Attracts butterflies. Does not tolerate prolonged, wet weather.
Thickleaf wild petunia <i>Ruellia succulenta</i>	12-18	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Herbaceous, succulent perennial with pink, petunia-like flowers year-round. <i>Ruellia caroliniensis</i> var. <i>succulenta</i> is a synonym.
Blue-eyed grass <i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>	12-20	Full sun	Low	Grass-like herbaceous plant with leaves resembling blades of grass and beautiful bluish-purple flowers with yellow centers. Prefers moist soil but is drought tolerant.
Pineland or sweet goldenrod <i>Solidago odora v. chapmanii</i>	12-24	Full sun to light shade	Moderate	Erect perennial with a slender stem topped in the fall by brilliant yellow flowers. Best if deadheaded in winter.
Seaside goldenrod <i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	36-48	Full sun	High	Tall, erect perennial similar to <i>S. odora</i> , but prefers dry, coastal, sandy sites in full sun.
Blue porterweed* <i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	12-36	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Small, shrubby, perennial groundcover bearing tiny bluish-purple flowers that are highly attractive to butterflies. Commonly mistaken for the imported <i>S. urticifolia</i> .
Pineland pinklet <i>Stenandrium dulce</i>	2-6	Full sun to deep shade	Low	Tiny, dwarf perennial that grows as a basal rosette of leaves, and produces short stalks bearing small pink flowers. Will eventually spread to form groundcover, but cannot tolerate competition from other plants.
Stokes aster <i>Stokesia laevis</i>	24	Partial shade	Low	Clumping perennial bearing terminal bluish, lavender, or sometimes white flowers. Cutting it back will encourage clump formation.
Rice button aster <i>Symphyotrichum dumosum</i>	12-24	Full sun to light shade	Low	Perennial wildflower with a distinctive and unusual growth habit, forming loose, wiry clumps of stems bearing numerous small leaves and small, lavender flowers. <i>Aster dumosus</i> is a synonym.
Spiderwort * <i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i>	18-24	Full sun to light shade	Low	Herbaceous plant with gray-green leaves and purple flowers that open in early morning and close by mid-afternoon. Prefers dry to moderately moist soil.

Table 2. Native shrubs and small trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Sweet acacia * <i>Acacia farnesiana</i>	15	Full sun	High	Small tree with sweet-smelling, yellow, "pom-pom-like" inflorescences. Needs good drainage.
Pineland acacia <i>Acacia pinetorum</i>	4-1	Full sun	High	Dwarf, spiny shrub with delicate, gray to gray-green, bipinnate leaves and round, "pom-pom-like" inflorescences. Flowers have strong, sweet fragrance.
Torchwood <i>Amyris elemifera</i>	8-15	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Evergreen, aromatic shrub or small tree. Bark gray brown. Leaves compound; leaflets dark, shiny green. White flowers fragrant, followed by purple or black edible fruit.
Marlberry * <i>Ardisia escallonioides</i>	5-20	Partial shade	High	Shrub to small tree with attractive foliage and berries. Can be used as small specimen tree or barrier shrub. Attracts birds. Does poorly in full sun.
Beautyberry * <i>Callicarpa Americana</i>	6-8	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	"Leggy" shrub, especially when grown in shade. Flowers are insignificant, but the long-lasting purple berries are quite attractive and provide a good food source for birds.
Spicewood <i>Calyptanthes pallens</i>	5-25	Partial Shade	Moderate	Small, shrubby tree with aromatic leaves, burgundy-tinged new growth, and insignificant white flowers. Can be sheared and grown as a hedge. Prefers moist soil.
Jamaica caper * <i>Capparis cynophallophora</i>	18	Full sun to partial shade	High	Slow-growing, undemanding plant with attractive white, fragrant, spidery, lily-like. With time, can be shaped into attractive hedge.
Cinnamon bark <i>Canella winterana</i>	10-30	Full sun to light shade	High	Very attractive, small, slow-growing tree with dense, broad crown; thick, aromatic leaves; fragrant, purplish flowers; and red berries. Flower aroma resembles daffodils; inner bark aroma resembles cinnamon. All parts poisonous, except berries. <i>Canella alba</i> is a synonym.
Limber caper * <i>Capparis flexuosa</i>	12-25	Full sun to full shade	High	Medium to large vining shrub with large, fragrant flowers in spring and beanlike fruit capsules in summer or fall.
Bird pepper <i>Capsicum annuum v. glabriusculum</i>	1.5-3	Full sun to deep shade	Low	Dwarf, dense, evergreen shrub with glossy, dark green leaves and tiny chile peppers that are highly attractive to birds. Wild ancestor from which our common sweet and chile peppers were derived.
Cocoplum * <i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i>	3-15	Full sun to partial shade	High	Shrub to small tree with attractive red new foliage. Often used as hedge, but will thin if planted in too much shade. Spreading and erect forms are available.
Snowberry <i>Chiococca alba</i>	2-3	Full sun	Low	Vining shrub with glossy green, elliptical to lanceolate leaves, and tiny white flowers. <i>Chiococca parvifolia</i> is a synonym.
Fiddlewood * <i>Citharexylum spinosum</i>	12-30	Full sun to partial shade	High	Large, densely leafy shrub to small tree with glossy, elliptical leaves and small, white, fragrant flowers. Female plants bear orange-brown berries that attract birds and other wildlife. <i>Citharexylum fruticosum</i> is a synonym.

Table 2. Native shrubs and small trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Pigeon plum * <i>Coccoloba diversifolia</i>	5-30	Full sun to partial shade	High	Large shrub to small tree with dense, narrowly rounded, evergreen crown and attractive, peeling bark. Small, dark purple berries on female trees attract birds. Susceptible to weevils.
Sea grape * <i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	10-50	Full sun	High	Large shrub to large tree with large, thick, saucer-like leaves bearing attractive venation and edible fruit. Leaves can be messy. Susceptible to weevils.
Coffee colubrina * <i>Colubrina arborescens</i>	20	Full sun to light shade	High	Large, coarse-leaved shrub/small tree with open crown of large, tri-lobed leaves, inconspicuous green flowers, and 3-seeded capsules. Attractive to butterflies and many other beneficial insects.
Buttonwood * <i>Conocarpus erectus</i>	5-50	Full sun to partial shade	High	Both green and silver leaved forms available; the latter is more attractive but also more susceptible to sooty mold and insect problems. Insignificant flowers are followed by small, button-like seed pods. Susceptible to some pests. Do not plant in marl soil.
Bloodberry <i>Cordia globosa</i>	4-9	Full sun to moderate shade	Low	Small, densely branched, evergreen shrub often growing in a rounded, symmetrical shape. Tiny white flowers are followed by small, brilliant red berries. Makes a great hedge, as it can be trimmed to nearly any shape or size.
Rhacoma <i>Crossopetalum rhacoma</i>	1.5-6	Full sun to moderate shade	High	Different forms available, from low and spreading to erect and shrub-like. All possess tiny leaves and bright red berries.
Pepperbush <i>Croton humilis</i>	3	Full sun to moderate shade	Low	Dwarf, rounded shrub with large, dark green leaves bearing numerous tiny, white, star-shaped hairs. Flowers form white, conspicuous starbursts.
Varnish leaf * <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	18	Full sun to partial shade	High	Grown for its attractive stiff, shiny green leaves. Showy, yellowish, 3-winged capsules produced in terminal clusters; brown, pink or purple at maturity. Dense and fast growing. Used as free-standing specimen or hedge. Excellent for beach-front.
Coral bean * <i>Erythrina herbacea</i>	3-15	Full sun	Low	Deciduous, 3-lobed compound leaves. Showy scarlet blossoms on tall stalks in spring, followed by large beans that split to reveal bright red seeds. May grow into small tree. All parts of this plant are poisonous; twigs prickly.
White stopper * <i>Eugenia axillaris</i>	5-20	Full sun to dense shade	High	Pale, whitish bark and aromatic foliage that can be overpowering. Small, white flowers in midsummer are followed by small, purplish berries. Attractive to birds.
Redberry stopper <i>Eugenia confusa</i>	6-18	Full sun to partial shade	High	Slow-growing shrub to small tree with attractive glossy leaves and red berries. Used as specimen plant or hedge. Narrow, upright growth suitable for restricted site.

Table 2. Native shrubs and small trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Spanish stopper * <i>Eugenia foetida</i>	18-36	Full sun to shade	High	Large shrub or small tree densely clothed with small, rounded leaves. Smallest flowers and fruits of all stoppers, but still attractive to wildlife. Excellent foundation or specimen plant.
Red stopper <i>Eugenia rhombea</i>	9	Full sun to shade	High	Reddish brown bark and elegant growth habit. Branches produced in flat sprays perpendicular to main trunk. Slow-growing and does not flower or fruit as a young plant.
Inkwood <i>Exothea paniculata</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Evergreen shrub to medium tree with narrow, erect growth habit. Bark gray. Leaves shiny dark green. Small clusters of insignificant, fragrant, white flowers. Wood very strong. Sap turns black when exposed to air.
Florida privet <i>Forestiera segregata</i>	10	Full sun	High	Bushy shrub with insignificant flowers. Wildlife attracted to its black fruit. Very tolerant of alkaline soils. Can be used as hedge plant in place of ligustrum.
Lignum vitae * <i>Guaicum sanctum</i>	6-25	Full sun	High	Attractive, slow-growing, large shrub to small tree, with blue flowers year-round, mostly in spring. Flowers followed by yellow seed pods which pop open to reveal shiny, bright red seeds. Extremely dense, prized wood.
Firebush * <i>Hamelia patens</i>	5-15	Shady to dappled sun	Low	Produces attractive orange/red flowers year-round. Indifferent to soil, providing drainage is good. In shade, becomes less shrubby and more tree-like. Highly attractive to butterflies.
Joewood <i>Jacquinia keyensis</i>	10	Full sun to partial shade	High	Slow-growing shrub with attractive foliage and showy, fragrant blooms. Good resistance to wind and salt spray. Shade from hottest sun beneficial. All parts poisonous.
Pineland lantana <i>Lantana depressa</i>	2-4	Full sun	High	See description in Table 1 above.
Buttonsage <i>Lantana involucrata</i>	4-5	Full sun	High	Upright, woody shrub with small, gray-green, rough-textured leaves and small white flowers.
Morinda, redgal <i>Morinda royoc</i>	5-10	Full sun to partial shade	High	Evergreen, vine-like shrub with long, thin leaves, small whitish to reddish flowers, and distinct yellowish fruit that smells of cheese when bruised.
Long-stalked stopper <i>Mosiera longipes</i>	1.5-3	Full sun to light shade	Low	Small shrub with small, dark green, glossy leaves and pale green new growth. Small white flowers are delicate in appearance, and are followed by blackish purple berries. <i>Psidium longipes</i> is a synonym.
Simpson's stopper * <i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i>	6-20	Full sun to partial shade	High	One of the most beautiful and ornamental native woody plants. Densely branched, densely leafy large shrub to small tree. Pure white, puffy flowers followed by large, bright orange berries that attract birds.

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Wax myrtle * <i>Myrica cerifera</i>	10-25	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Fast-growing shrub to small tree with small, evergreen leaves, inconspicuous flowers, and waxy gray fruit attached to the twigs. Leaves and fruit smell like bayberry. Tolerates periodic flooding. Natural insect repellent. Attracts birds. Tip dieback can be a problem.
Lancewood <i>Ocotea coriacea</i>	15-25	Full sun to full shade	Low	Relatively short-lived, densely branched shrub or small tree with broad, oval crown, glossy leaves, inconspicuous flowers, and distinctive, dark purple or black berries held in a yellowish or reddish cup. <i>Nectandra coriacea</i> is a synonym.
Bitterbush <i>Picramnia pentandra</i>	5-10	Full sun to deep shade	Low	Tough, shrubby tree with compound leaves and long, drooping inflorescences bearing tiny, fragrant flowers. Fruit are eaten by a variety of animals. Also the larval food plant of the bush sulphur butterfly.
Blackbead * <i>Pithecellobium keyense</i>	10-20	Full sun to partial shade	High	Large shrub or small tree with leaves divided into four leaflets. New leaves tinged with red or maroon. Flowers are delicate, fragrant, and white to pink. Contorted bean pods split open to reveal black seeds covered with a fleshy red aril. Wood is weak.
Bahama or privet-leaf wild coffee <i>Psychotria ligustrifolia</i>	6-9	Partial to full shade	Low	Densely leafy large shrub or small tree with dark green, glossy foliage. Like the other native wild coffees, it also bears a proliferation of red berries. <i>Psychotria bahamensis</i> is a synonym.
Wild coffee * <i>Psychotria nervosa</i>	6-9	Partial to full shade	Low	Small, understory shrub with distinctive glossy, dark green leaves with deeply impressed side veins. Bears small, insignificant flowers, followed by prolific red berries.
Velvetleaf wild coffee * <i>Psychotria sulzneri</i>	6-9	Partial to full shade	Low	Similar in all respects to <i>P. nervosa</i> , but with velvety, deep blue-green foliage. All wild coffees require some shade to look their best.
White indigoberry <i>Randia aculeata</i>	1.5-10	Full sun to partial shade	High	Non-descript, upright shrub with fragrant flowers. Female plants bear white berries that are an intense blue inside. Main attribute is ability to grow under adverse conditions.
Myrsine <i>Rapanea punctata</i>	25	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Evergreen large shrub to small tree resembling marlberry. Bark pale gray. Flowers small, white, sometimes with some purple. Berries dark purple or black. <i>Myrsine floridana</i> is a synonym.
Rouge plant <i>Rivina humilis</i>	3-5	Full sun to full shade	Low	Unassuming, small, carefree plant with dark green, glossy leaves, tiny white flowers, and bright red berries.
American elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	10-15	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Bushy, multi-stemmed shrub with deciduous, compound leaves, tiny, star-shaped, white flowers, and shiny, blue-black fruit. Provides colorful autumn display of yellows, oranges, and reds. Branches brittle. Forms dense thickets by suckering from roots.

Table 2. Native shrubs and small trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Maidenbush <i>Savia bahamensis</i>	10-15	Partial shade	High	Shrub or small tree with whitish bark, pale green, alternate leaves. Native to Florida Keys.
Inkberry <i>Scaevola plumieri</i>	2-4	Full sun to partial shade	High	Short plant with succulent leaves and insignificant pink and white flowers. Spreads by underground rhizomes. Well-suited to sandy soils at beach-front.
Florida boxwood <i>Schaefferia frutescens</i>	10-30	Partial to full shade	Low	Thin-branched, leafy shrub to small tree with dark green, shiny leaves and flowers and fruit (on female plants) all year. Can be pruned as a hedge.
Bahama senna * <i>Senna mexicana</i> <i>var. chapmanii</i>	3-5	Full sun to partial shade	High	Upright or sprawling shrub, with bipinnate leaves and terminal clusters of beautiful, orange-red flowers.
Saw palmetto * <i>Serenoa repens</i>	3-8	Full sun to partial shade	High	Clumping fan palm with prostrate or upright trunks. One of the most abundant native palms in Florida. Green and silver forms available. Spreading tendency can be a problem when left uncontrolled. Petioles heavily armed.
Willow bastic * <i>Sideroxylon salicifolium</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Evergreen woody shrub or medium tree. Bark gray. Leaves medium green, shiny above and dull below, with yellow veins. Flowers produced from warty, pod-like structures.
Necklace-pod * <i>Sophora tomentosa</i>	6	Full sun	High	Large, densely branched shrub with natural rounded shape. Bears clusters of yellow flowers at tips of branches. Fast-growing and easily cultivated. Seeds poisonous.
Bay cedar <i>Suriana maritima</i>	6-12	Full sun	High	Evergreen shrub or small tree with clusters of small, leathery leaves and attractive, peeling bark. Will grow in sand or on bare rock. Good choice for beach-front sites.
Tetrazygia, West Indian lilac <i>Tetrazygia bicolor</i>	6-12	Full sun to light shade	Low	Extremely ornamental shrub or small tree with elegant, glossy, dark green foliage and beautiful white and yellow flowers followed by purple-black berries. Highly attractive to birds. Branches die when pruned.
Florida trema <i>Trema micranthum</i>	5-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Usually an evergreen, sprawling shrub, but can grow to medium sized tree. Leaves alternate on branch, dull green, and rough textured. Insignificant flowers followed by tiny, yellow-orange berries all along the smallest branches.
Spanish bayonet * <i>Yucca aloifolia</i>	5-20	Full sun or partial shade	High	Trunk-forming yucca with dangerously pointed, strap-like leaves. Trunks often topped with large, upright clusters of creamy white flowers. Spreads to form thicket.
Bear grass, Adamneedle <i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	3-6	Full sun	High	Long, green, spear-like leaves edged with white threads, forming a basal rosette. White, bell-shaped flowers bloom in terminal spikes from mid to late summer.

Table 2. Native shrubs and small trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Florida coontie * <i>Zamia floridana</i>	1-5	Full sun to shade	High	Florida's only native cycad. Comes in a variety of sizes and with narrow to wide leaflets. Separate male and female plants. Sole larval food source for atala hairstreak butterfly. Requires well-drained soil. <i>Zamia pumila</i> and <i>Z. integrifolia</i> are synonyms.
Wild lime * <i>Zanthoxylum fagara</i>	20	Full sun	Moderate	Attractive tree with recurved spines, lime-scented foliage, and insignificant yellow flowers that attract butterflies.

Table 3. Native medium and large trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Spineless acacia, cinnecord * <i>Acacia choriophylla</i>	30	Full sun	High	Medium-sized tree with dense, rounded crown, long, bipinnate leaves, and tiny yellow to golden "pom-pom-like" inflorescences. Spines are much reduced, but still present. Also mistakenly known as <i>A. choriophylloides</i> .
Strongback * <i>Bourreria succulenta</i>	30	Full sun to partial shade	High	Rapidly growing, evergreen tree with numerous small, white flowers followed by orange berries that attract birds. Commonly -- but mistakenly -- known as strongbark.
Gumbo limbo * <i>Bursera simaruba</i>	20-50	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Grown for its attractive, peeling, bronze to red bark and its large, appealing form. Cuttings take easily but are weak-rooted. Not a strong tree; limbs may break in strong winds.
Myrtle-of-the- River <i>Calypttranthes zuzygium</i>	20-40	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Large shrub to medium tree with olive-green leaves, pale, pink-tinged new growth and showy, fragrant, white flowers. Endangered in Florida. Related to spicewood, but with larger flowers.
Cinnamon bark <i>Canella winterana</i>	10-30	Full sun to light shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.
Satinleaf * <i>Chrysophyllum oliviforme</i>	30	Full sun	Moderate	Very attractive tree. Tops of leaves glossy, vivid green; underside covered with soft, coppery brown hairs. Can be difficult to establish.
Fiddlewood * <i>Citharexylum spinosum</i>	12-30	Full sun to partial shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.
Pigeon plum * <i>Coccoloba diversifolia</i>	5-30	Full sun to partial shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.

Table 3. Native medium and large trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Sea grape * <i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	5-50	Full sun	High	See description in Table 2 above.
Buttonwood * <i>Conocarpus erectus</i>	5-50	Full sun to partial shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.
American persimmon <i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	50	Full sun	None	Slow-growing, dioecious, deciduous tree with elliptical, two-tone leaves and black, textured bark. Females produce two fruits that ripen to deliciously sweet. Tends to root sucker. Choose named cultivars, such as 'Triumph'. Prefers moist soil when in fruit. Attracts wildlife.
Inkwood <i>Exothea paniculata</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	See description in Table 2 above.
Shortleaf fig <i>Ficus citrifolia</i>	25-50	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Medium-sized, fast-growing, attractive tree. Lacks typical aerial roots, but still requires adequate room for root development. Also known as wild banyan tree.
Longleaf bolly <i>Guapira discolor</i>	30	Full sun to light shade	High	Attractive shade tree, especially for beach-front. Hardy and adaptable. Greenish flowers insignificant. Female trees bear small, red berries.
Krug holly * <i>Ilex krugiana</i>	30	Partial shade	High	Tropical holly with glossy foliage and black fruits. Well adapted to south Florida. Small, red berries ripen to black.
Black ironwood * <i>Krugiodendron ferreum</i>	30	Full sun to light shade	Low	Evergreen tree with dark, emerald green, glossy leaves and small black berries. Narrow crown allows it to be planted in tight spaces.
Wild tamarind * <i>Lysiloma latisiliquum</i>	40-60	Full Sun	Moderate	Attractive, fast-growing tree, but with weak wood. Bipinnately compound leaves, small, white/pink inflorescences, and long brown seed pods.
Red mulberry <i>Morus rubra</i>	70	Full sun	Low	Spreading crown with serrated, heart-shaped leaves with a rough upper surface. Relatively tasteless, copious amounts of fruit attract birds and other wildlife.
Jamaican dogwood <i>Piscidia piscipula</i>	30-50	Full sun	High	Fast-growing, attractive, deciduous tree with dark green leaves and masses of white flowers prior to leafing out in spring. All parts of the tree are poisonous.
West Indian cherry <i>Prunus myrtifolia</i>	20-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Accent or specimen tree with shiny, lime green, evergreen leaves and reddish-gray trunk bearing shallow cracks. Fruit is food source for many birds and small animals. Leaves and seeds poisonous to humans.
Laurel oak * <i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	60-70	Full sun	High	Large, semi-evergreen tree with lance-shaped leaves, shiny green above and pale green below. Deeply furrowed bark. Pyramidal when young; rounded when full grown. Faster growing but weaker and shorter-lived than live oak. Very sensitive to being planted too deep.

Table 3. Native medium and large trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Live oak * <i>Quercus virginiana</i>	40-50	Full sun	High	Impressive, undemanding, tree. Not for small lots. Caterpillars, insect galls, and root rot sometimes a problem. Needs early pruning to properly shape into tree.
Soapberry <i>Sapindus saponaria</i>	20-60	Full sun	High	Broad crown, dense foliage, and attractive yellow fruit. Excellent shade tree for small yards. Seeds poisonous.
Mastic * <i>Sideroxylon foetidissimum</i>	50-70	Full sun	Moderate	Large tree with pale, bright yellow, fragrant flowers in summer, and fruit in late winter. Excellent resistance to storms. <i>Mastichodendron foetidissimum</i> is a synonym.
Willow bustic * <i>Sideroxylon salicifolium</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	See description in Table 2 above.
Paradise tree * <i>Simarouba glauca</i>	30-50	Full sun	Low	Large, elegant tree with a broad crown of dark green, glossy leaves divided into 10-14 stiff, rounded leaflets. Separate male and female trees. Females produce an abundance of small fruit. Requires excellent drainage.
Mahogany * <i>Swietenia mahagoni</i>	40-75	Full sun	Moderate	Attractive, storm-resistant tree. Prized for their wood, which is a deep red color. Falling woody cones can damage vehicles. Foliage occasionally chewed by insects.
Florida trema <i>Trema micranthum</i>	5-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	See description in Table 2 above.

Table 4. Native palms and our single native cycad for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida. Note also that all of these palms are resistant to lethal yellowing disease.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Silver palm * <i>Coccothrinax argentata</i>	3-8	Full sun	High	Small, slow-growing palm with round, palmate leaves that are dark, shiny green above and silvery below. Small, purplish-black fruit produced nearly year-round.
Buccaneer palm, Sargentcherry palm * <i>Pseudophoenix sargentii</i>	10	Full sun	High	Slow-growing feather leaf palm. Grows naturally in sandy or limestone soils in areas that receive little rainfall. Gray trunk and prominent gray-green crownshaft, topped by sparse crown of silvery-blue-green leaves. Produces grape-sized, red fruit. Considered endangered in Florida, but common in the nursery trade.

Table 4. Native palms and our single native cycad for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida. Note also that all of these palms are resistant to lethal yellowing disease.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Scrub palmetto <i>Sabal etonia</i>	3-5	Full sun	Moderate	Small, trunkless, solitary, shrub-like fan palm native to central Florida. Bears large clusters of small, purplish black fruit. Grows best in sandy soils.
Dwarf blue palmetto * <i>Sabal minor</i>	2-4	Partial shade	Moderate	Small, trunkless, shrub-like palm native to central and north Florida. Resembles <i>S. etonia</i> , but smaller and with bluish-green leaves. Can tolerate wet soils.
Cabbage palm * <i>Sabal palmetto</i>	25-50	Full sun to partial shade	High	Common tall palm with rounded crown of fan-shaped leaves and smooth or rough trunk. Highly adaptable. Florida's state "tree." Often over-used in landscaping.
Saw palmetto * <i>Serenoa repens</i>	3-8	Full sun to partial shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.
Keys thatch palm * <i>Thrinax morrissii</i>	15	Full sun to partial sun	High	Grows naturally in alkaline soils, sometimes on limestone outcrops. Fan-shaped leaves are bluish-green above and silvery below. Small white fruit produced in the fall.
Florida thatch palm * <i>Thrinax radiata</i>	25	Full sun to partial sun	High	Grows naturally in sand or on limestone. Differs from <i>T. morrissii</i> by having leaves that are green on both sides.
Florida coontie * <i>Zamia floridana</i>	1-5	Full sun to shade	High	Florida's only native cycad. See full description in Table 2 above.

Table 5. Native ornamental grasses, ferns, and groundcovers for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Quail berry, ground holly * <i>Crossopetalum ilicifolium</i>	12 inches	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Prostrate, evergreen shrubby groundcover with small, holly-like, spiny leaves and attractive red berries.
Penny grass <i>Dichondra carolinensis</i>	2 inches	Full sun	High	Low-growing groundcover for edges and mass plantings. Inconspicuous flowers and evergreen foliage. Prefers moist soil.
Elliottlove grass <i>Eragrostis elliotii</i>	12-24 inches	Full sun to light shade	Low	Small, fine-textured bunchgrass with beautiful, silvery-blue leaves and masses of tiny, delicate flower spikes.
Purple love grass * <i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	12-18 inches	Full sun	Low	Clumping ornamental grass with soft, light green, fine-textured leaves and delicate panicles of tiny, reddish-purple flowers held high above foliage. Grows well in hot, dry sites; will not tolerate wet, shady sites.

Table 5. Native ornamental grasses, ferns, and groundcovers for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Sunshine mimosa <i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>	6-9 inches	Full sun	Moderate	Prostrate, carpeting perennial with creeping, widely spreading stems. Leaves are finely divided and bipinnate. Flowers are pink powderpuffs. Can become weedy.
Long-stalked stopper <i>Mosiera longipes</i>	1.5-3 feet	Full sun to light shade	Low	See description in Table 2 above.
Muhly grass * <i>Muhlenbergia capillaries</i>	2-3 feet	Full sun to partial shade	High	Elegant, compact, tuft-forming ornamental grass with fine, feather-like, pink flower spikes held high above the leaves.
Native sword fern <i>Nephrolepis biserrata</i>	3-4 feet	Partial to full shade	Low	Tall fern with elegant leaves. Makes an excellent groundcover or informal hedge. Commonly available form is called fishtail fern
Baby rubber plant * <i>Peperomia obtusifolia</i>	12-18 inches	Partial to full shade	Low	Bushy groundcover with fleshy leaves and occasional spikes of minute flowers. Plain green or variegated cultivars, the latter with leaves marbled in gray-green and cream or gold.
Silkgrass * <i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>	2-3 feet	Full sun	Low	See description in Table 1 above.
Pineland brake <i>Pteris bahamensis</i>	1-2 feet	Full sun to light shade	Low	Elegant fern that grows in tidy clumps. Old, brown leaves accumulate after a while. Entire plant can be cut back to the ground in early spring to rejuvenate the plant.
Sea purslane <i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	6-8 inches	Full sun	High	Sprawling, succulent groundcover with small, light green to yellow, bead-like leaves and tiny purplish-pink flowers. Good for beach-front properties.
Lopsided Indian grass <i>Sorghastrum secundum</i>	24-48 inches	Full sun to light shade	Low	Beautiful, clump-forming grass with fairly nondescript leaves in spring and summer. In late summer or early fall, however, 4- to 6-foot spikes emerge containing multicolored flowers along only one side of the spike.
Sand cordgrass * <i>Spartina bakeri</i>	4-6 feet	Full sun	High	Large, bunch-forming grass with thin, brownish-green, rolled, wire-like, sand-papery leaves. Highly adaptable and underutilized. Good for beach-front.
Pineland dropseed <i>Sporobolus junceus</i>	1-3 feet	Full sun	Moderate	One of the most beautiful and ornamental of all grasses. Forms large, hemispherical clumps of tiny, wire-like leaves of blue-green or silvery green. Flower spikes are tall and bear numerous tiny, reddish-colored flowers.
Blue porterweed* <i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	12-36 inches	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	See description in Table 1 above.
Fakahatchee grass * <i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	4-5 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Large grass with rich green foliage that erupts from fountain-like clumps. Distinctive flowers rise above leaves on slender stems in midsummer. Easy to grow. Virtually free of pests.

Table 5. Native ornamental grasses, ferns, and groundcovers for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Florida gamma grass * <i>Tripsacum floridana</i>	2-4 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Similar to <i>T. dactyloides</i> , but smaller and with finer-textured leaves. Also called dwarf Fakahatchee grass.
Florida coontie * <i>Zamia floridana</i>	1-5 feet	Full sun to shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.

Table 6. Native vines for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name Scientific name	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Beach bean <i>Canavalia rosea</i>	6-12 inches	Full sun	High	Attractive purple flowers. Excellent groundcover for beach-front locations, although it can grow into surrounding shrubs or over fences.
Limber caper * <i>Capparis flexuosa</i>	12-25 feet	Full sun to full shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.
Butterfly pea <i>Centrosema virginianum</i>	3-12 feet	Full sun	Low	Easily cultivated vine with delicate, finely divided leaves bearing three long, narrow lobes. Flowers are purplish-pink and pea-like in appearance.
Rubber vine, devilpotato <i>Echites umbellata</i>	10-30 feet	Full sun	Low	Evergreen, twining, climbing vine with dark green, glossy leaves and beautiful tubular white flowers. All parts of this plant are highly toxic.
Railroad vine <i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i>	3-8 inches	Full sun	High	Course, sprawling vine with smooth, fleshy leaves and large, rosy pink, flowers.
Beach morning glory <i>Ipomoea stolonifera</i>	6 inches	Full sun	High	Twining, viney groundcover grows over sand dunes. Blooms from spring to fall, with white flowers opening each morning and closing in the afternoon. Ideal for beach-front.
Key morning glory <i>Jacquemontia pentanthos</i>	10-20 feet	Full sun	High	Twining, rambling vine with type flowers in spring, summer, and fall. Native to Florida Keys, so is susceptible to frost. Also called skyblue clustervine.
Coral honeysuckle * <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	10-15 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Showy evergreen vine that blooms heavily in the spring with clusters of tubular, orange-red flowers that attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
Morinda, redgal <i>Morinda royoc</i>	5-10 feet	Full sun to partial shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.

Table 6. Native vines for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants commonly available in native nurseries in south Florida.)

Common name <i>Scientific name</i>	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Passion flower * <i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	5-10 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Vine with shiny green leaves and large, showy, fringed white/purple flowers followed by medium-sized, purple fruit. Highly attractive to butterflies as a larval food plant.
Corky-stemmed passion flower * <i>Passiflora suberosa</i>	20 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Vine with shiny green leaves and very small, greenish yellow flowers followed by small, purple fruit. Highly attractive to tropical zebra butterflies as a larval food plant.
Wild allamanda * <i>Pentalinon luteum</i>	50 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Fast growing, twining vine to 50 inches in length. Lustrous, elliptical leaves with lighter colored midribs. Blooms year-round. Blossoms bright yellow, bell-shaped. <i>Urechites lutea</i> is a synonym.
Rubber or mangrove vine <i>Rhabdadenia biflora</i>	12 feet	Full sun to partial shade	High	Robust, twining vine with dark green leaves and beautiful, paper-white flowers with yellow centers and edges tinged with pink. Often found in association with mangroves, but it does not require such conditions to grow well.
Mistletoe cactus <i>Rhipsalis baccifera</i>	6 feet	Light to full shade	High	Hanging epiphytic cactus with pencil-thin, yellowish stems 2 feet or more in length. Bears small, white flowers and small, white berries with black seeds.