The more I thought of the subject assigned to me by Secretary Floyd, the more convinced I became that it would be a wise subject to sidestep. It would be better for me to address you on that oft asked question, “Oh! what can I plant in my garden?” and explain that for the past six years my thoughts have been in Southeast Florida where conditions have been favorable to varieties I might mention, with the thought that possibly this material may be a new story to some of you, and at the same time giving a report on their conduct to those of you who have fallen in love with them. I use the expression “love” knowingly, because I have observed some of our best minds in floricultural endeavor become madly in love with particular plants and their ensuing conduct quite in proportion to all that the word “love” expresses.

To begin with, I would have you know, that to my mind no plant is objectionable. Of course, I like and admire some plants better than others, but I despise none. Not even that little, sometimes called pest, “Malvaviscus” or “Turk’s Cap.” My reason for this condition of mind is because in my vocation it becomes necessary for me to know the abilities and the possibilities of every plant applicable to our section, and likewise of varieties new to me. When you observe the amount of Malvaviscus in Tampa as a flowering vine, where sudden frosts kill many more beautiful vines, and in Jacksonville as a shrub where freezes prevent the use of even Bougainvillea, or Crotons, and more colorful foliage; and used as a standard, full of flame colored bloom on the roof garden of the Alba, Palm Beach, and in Miami as a filler for heavy mass plantings, really you cannot despise this sturdy wonderfully adaptable plant.

One can develop a dislike for it, however, where it is permitted among such surroundings as to cause a jarring note. This same plant will cause a terrible shock to your finer senses when you see it combined with purple Bougainvillea, and Acalypha Mosaica. At the same time the durability of this plant caused thousands to plant it, creating a condition which makes for a tendency to dislike it.

I believe that we should recognize the distinction between a plant’s particular ability to withstand severe conditions and its ability to adapt itself to be appropriate and look pretty in certain places. For instance, there is a definite reason for lack of color along our ocean frontage or in positions that are often blasted by severe east and northeast winds.

The Pittosporum or “Pitosporum” as some pronounce it, has the ability to thrive under the salty and almost con-
stant breeze from our ocean. May I pause here and ask you to forgive me if I do not pronounce plant names as some of you folks do. Really it is a gardener’s privilege to stick to the old pronunciation of plant names as likewise it is the privilege of others to use the newer or correct terms. Getting back to Pittosporum, it is one of the few plants that is safe to plant in exposed positions. It is advisable to consider the possibility of overdoing our planting of Pittosporum. With this in mind, why use the Pittosporum in protected area, except of course where again it does noble work, as a standard, or as a hedge. It could be used as a foundation planting, and we are very much inclined to use it too, because of its thorough hardiness. But for the protected areas of the garden, I would have you use such plants as are too tender for exposed positions. Even with the very hardy Hibiscus, it is sheer folly to expose it to a salt air condition. A week’s time will burn it. You will note my term “hardy.” That word in Florida describes the plant’s ability to withstand neglect from gardeners. I have heard it said that you can grow anything in Florida, providing the proper intelligence is behind it. I am beginning to believe this, too, because we keep adding and adding to our list of material, such material as was previously considered impossible.

Color and variety is the need in many of our gardens. I would have you consider the use of Monstera deliciosa, a vine having huge leaves with large holes in them as though cut out with mother’s cooky stamp. The sturdiness of this vine adds to its attractiveness and in a protected garden its culture is very simple.

The Cassia of which there are increasing varieties adaptable to our gardens, are becoming very much favored. Cassia bicapularis is especially good, having an attractive dark green foliage with panicles of bright yellow blooms, with three and four blooming periods a year, depending upon the attention given to it.

You know, speaking about attention to plants, I have always maintained that a successful garden demands the existence of a lover of flowers, for with that love, comes genuine attention. One drying out to any plant will cause harmful results. Some to a less degree than others, to be sure. To the Australian Tree Fern one drying out will cause the loss of one or two fronds overnight. Companionship on the part of the gardener will not allow a plant to become impoverished.

The Cassia bicapularis may be used as a shrub or a vine, as it makes a very thick compact growth, which is quite useful for background purposes.

The Cassia alata, sometimes called “Golden Candle,” is good. One must make allowance for its bare stems after blooming, or treat it as we do Poinsettias, cutting it back every season. Its mass of golden yellow bloom makes it a very worthy subject.

Cassia fistula is very good, having a large panicle of yellow blooms similar in size to the solanum blooms. This is called Golden Shower Tree. Cassia corymbosa is an aristocrat among the Cassias with blooms similar to Cassia alata, but more distinguished looking with an almost black appearance at the bottom of
its yellow petals. Its foliage holds up splendidly and is very attractive.

Lawsonia rosea and Alba are well recommended, its light airy foliage fitting into the garden and patio. Its roses and cream colored blooms giving a delicate fragrance which is very desirable.

Dracaenas are becoming more favored. The numerous varieties will attract those who love the unusual. The Lord Wolsley, Terminalis, and Fragans are three popular varieties. The Massangeanea, the green variety with wide waxy leaves, makes a happy combination for the brighter colored Dracaenas, though the red variety fits in with most backgrounds of green. The Dracaenas lend a tropical atmosphere, and are a source of delight to those used to pampering it in northern greenhouses.

Many Acacias are acceptable, Farnesiana or so called Popinac with its small leaves and tiny balls of yellow lend a misty effect.

Parkinsonia aculeata will also give this misty effect in a different manner. The Acacia foliage being more or less erect, with an inclination to reach out, while the Parkinsonia foliage hangs from its branches. The Almonds are suggested too, either in tree form or trained to a flat surface. Their gray green foliage is splendid material.

Melaleuca leucadendron (I like to say that word), the Cajaput Tree, as it is sometimes called, is an object of much interest. We find too that it will withstand considerable exposure, though not quite so happy as when protected, just a little. Its bark is similar to punk, in fact, you can push a pin through it, providing you and the pin are strong enough. There seems to be no woody substance to it, but it will stand a very strong wind which sometimes visits us during our summers.

Bottle Brush is good because of its unusual bloom. A red spike is shaped just like the old fashioned bottle brush.

The Tea Plant, Camellia Thea, is very likable having a dark green foliage with flowers shaped like apple blossoms. It is interesting too, because of its use in some countries for commercial tea.

The fancy leaf Aralia, a little departure from often used Aralia, though possessing all of its hardiness, fits in nicely.

Schinus is especially fine if so placed as to have its green foliage and red berries hanging over a wall, though they are not quite so resistant to exposure as Pittosporum. Schinus is a very good material for semi-exposed conditions. It makes a tree if properly trained and is a member of the same family as that of the California Pepper Tree.

Sanchesia makes a rampant colorful foliage having an unusual bloom spike at the end of its growth, with a very tropical appearance, but is very tender.

Triphasia is a coming material for many purposes. Its dwarf growth and red cherry like fruit makes a good hedge plant. Masses of it are good too, adding a very nice touch to the garden.

Jasminum simplicificium is another plant adaptable to many uses. It attracts much attention as a closely clipped hedge in the formal gardens of the James Deering Estate. As a vine, with its glossy green leaves and tiny white bloom, it is very desirable.
The giant leaf Caladium, so called "Elephant Ear," demands a protected area, but well repays one in appearance for the efforts involved.

Eranthemum, or Blue Sage, is a much sought, heavenly blue. It has a tendency toward yellow foliage, but diligent attention will overcome this.

Acacia aricalaformis is a tree which promises a great deal, being a rapid grower with tropical appearance, and bearing yellow blooms. This would be a nice addition to our garden possibilities.

Thunbergia erecta, with purple bloom having a yellow center, is very interesting and very easily grown.

Latania rubra, one of our most distinguished appearing palms, presents itself for nice little touches here and there in the garden, either in tubs or planted, as one can move or transplant them as they become large. A large Rubra is something rare, indeed.

The Thrinax Palms offer much for the patio, as they have that sketchy appearance which artists value so highly. The Hydriastele wendlandiana is helping to ease our disappointment of not having an abundance of fish tail palms. The Hydriastele is similar in shape to fish tail palms and is equally resistant to inside conditions.

Kentia Palms are very appropriate, though too tender for full sun exposures. Their green graceful fronds create a wonderful decorative effect.

Allow me to leave the suggestion that you try a few varieties of Hemerocallis, the Yellow Day Lily. It blooms frequently with us because it never becomes fully dormant. Can you not visualize their yellow blooms among a mass of green foliage.

I stop with these varieties—because one has to have a stopping point when speaking of garden material—also to explain that with the varieties just mentioned, one can create a stunning effect in an area, say 20x20 feet. The fact that we have just completed a similar effect in one of our Palm Beach gardens will bear me out in this statement.

In conclusion, allow me to say a word for the gardeners of Florida. Much of the success of any garden depends, very much, upon the ability and the personality of its gardener. Our State has been under a severe handicap, in that it possesses but few gardeners—comparatively speaking—who have known its likes and dislikes for generations, as may be said of the gardeners of the North, Scotland, Germany, France, England and those points where gardeners are born with a trowel in their hands.

In many instances, I could name gardeners who have come from other sections, filled with enthusiasm over our opportunities and their knowledge. But, alas, a few years and they are hopelessly discouraged. They damn our conditions, and both the gardens and gardeners suffer.

But I am happy to report that there are personalities who are capable of adjusting themselves and who are concentrating on finding out why this and that can't be done.

Is it not reassuring to you to know that men like Gustave Thommen and David Howells—I could mention many more who have national reputations as
gardeners—have adjusted themselves to Florida conditions? They are men who have spent a lifetime growing successfully under entirely different conditions to which we possess, but they have the manhood to admit that they have much to learn about Florida growing conditions and are concentrating on finding out the whys and wherefores. Gardeners of this type will not only assist in solving many of our problems, but they will elevate the profession of gardeners and what profession is more noble, than that of working with God's handiwork?

I have heard men of sound reasoning and enviable reputations say "Why! you can't grow Orchids in Florida." Florida is the home of Orchids. No less authority than Dr. J. K. Small says that Florida is the native home of 40 Orchids, 20 Epiphytes, 170 different Ferns, which is one-third of the Ferns in North America; 368 Trees, which is over half of the total of native trees in North America; and of 9 Native Palms.

We are only scratching the surface of Florida gardening. I am convinced that the fellow who named Florida the Land of Flowers, must have been a real gardener, who knew absolutely what he was talking about.