

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS OF THE DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF MANATEE COUNTY

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Manatee County's geography extends from the west coastal islands to approximately 40 miles inland. The soil differences include coastal islands, flatwoods, sandy ridges, flood plains, swamps and marshes. Soil pH changes dramatically from the high pH of the coastal islands to the very low pH of the flatwoods, flood plains, swamps and marshes. Also, during the winter, the islands tend to stay warmer with the temperature getting progressively colder for a longer time period as one goes further inland. The objective of this project was to showcase plants that will do well in a given geographical area of Manatee County

so that homeowners can see the plants, how they grow and what plants can be used for a respective geographical area.

A total of six demonstration gardens were planted with different themes. Three of the gardens were planted to represent the three major geographical areas of Manatee County (beach, central, eastern). Plants were chosen for each garden according to soil pH, drought or water-tolerance, salt-tolerance, and heat or cold-tolerance needed for each specific geographical area. Signage for each area describes its specific plant requirements and all plants are labeled with common and Latin names. Plant labels also indicate whether the plant is native or exotic.

The plants used in each garden are listed in Tables 1-6. Gardens are used for teaching classes and are also used for individual learning as people visit the gardens. These gardens have become a great teaching and learning tool for the general public. Citizens are able to see the plants, how they grow and in which areas of the county specific plants should be planted.

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Table 1. Plants in the East Manatee County Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida native	Notes
East Palatka Holly	<i>Ilex × attenuata</i>	Tree, evergreen	Yes	Moderate grower, hardy, 30' × 20'
Plumbago	<i>Plumbago auriculata</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	South African native, light blue or white flowers
Muhley Grass	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Grass	Yes	Medium growth, full sun, purple plumes in fall, cut back after bloom
Dwarf Indian Hawthorn	<i>Raphiolepis indica</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	Ground cover, low maintenance, spring flowering, slow growing
Schillings Holly	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	Hardy, prunes well, 3-4', moderate growth, forms natural ball shape
Podocarpus	<i>Podocarpus macrophyllus</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	China native, full sun to part shade, to 45', fine textured, flat needles, densely foliated
Dwarf Fakahatchee Grass	<i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	Grass	Yes	Fine texture, sun only, no known pests
Coral Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Vine, evergreen	Yes	Salt tolerant, full sun to part shade, orange-red flowers, several cultivars available
Coontie	<i>Zamia floridana</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	1-3', slow grower, best in part shade, prefers well drained soil, densely foliated
Carolina Jessamine	<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Vine, evergreen	Yes	Very fragrant, yellow flowers
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Shrub	Yes	Hardy, heat tolerant, full sun to part shade, pest and disease resistant, purple flowers and clumps of berries
Dwarf Walter's Viburnum	<i>Viburnum obovatum</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	Small white flowers in spring
Southern Wax Myrtle	<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	Large, pink and white flowers
Saw palmetto	<i>Serenoa repens</i>	Palm, evergreen	Yes	Very salt tolerant, tolerates sandy soils, pest free, cold hardy, slow grower
Muscadine Grape	<i>Vitis rotundifolia</i>	Vine	Yes	All zones, grows to 40'
King Sago	<i>Cycas revoluta</i>	Cycad	No	Slow grower

Table 2. Plants in the West Manatee County Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida native	Notes
Lantana	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	Salt tolerant, fast growing, butterfly attractor, waterwise, South American native, woody groundcover, almost continuous flowering
Dwarf Indian Hawthorn	<i>Raphiolepis indica</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	Ground cover, low maintenance, spring flowering, slow growing
Coontie	<i>Zamia floridana</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	1-3', slow grower, best in part shade, prefers well drained soil, densely foliated

Table 2. (Continued) Plants in the West Manatee County Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida native	Notes
Fire bush	<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	Heavy feeder, graceful open bush, prefers damp places, drought tolerant
Confederate Jasmine	<i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i>	Vine	No	China native, 5 petal flowers, very fragrant
Podocarpus	<i>Podocarpus macrophyllus</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	China native, full sun to part shade, to 45', fine textured, flat needles, densely foliated
Cardboard Palm	<i>Zamia furfuracea</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	Salt resistant, prefers well drained, sandy soil, coarse texture, spreading, loose habit
Muhley Grass	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Grass	Yes	Medium growth, full sun, purple plumes in fall, cut back after bloom
Snow-Bush	<i>Breynia disticha (Breynia nivosa)</i>	Shrub	No	Multicolored leaves
Walking Iris	<i>Neomarica gracilis</i>	Grassy clumps	No	Stolon puts out pups
Liriope	<i>Liriope muscari</i>	Herbaceous perennial	No	Evergreen tufts
Hibiscus	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Shrub	No	Some species are native
Perennial Peanut	<i>Arachis glabrata</i>	Ground cover	No	Yellow bloom, edible
Simpson Stopper	<i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i>	Tree	Yes	Fragrant flowers & decorative orange fruit
Bromeliads	<i>Tillandsia spp.</i>	Air plant	Yes	Rosette of long spiky leaves & central flower spike

Table 3. Plants in the Island Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida Native	Notes
Lantana	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	Shrub, Evergreen	No	Salt tolerant, fast growing, butterfly attractor, waterwise, South American native, woody groundcover, almost continuous flowering
Coral Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Vine, Evergreen	Yes	Salt tolerant, full sun to part shade, orange-red flowers, several cultivars available
Coontie	<i>Zamia floridana</i>	Shrub, Evergreen	Yes	1-3', slow grower, best in part shade, prefers well drained soil, densely foliated
Florida Privet	<i>Forestiera segregata</i>	Shrub	Yes	No maintenance or judicious pruning
Ti Plant	<i>Cordyline terminalis</i>	Shrub	No	Colorful upright
Frangipani	<i>Plumeria spp.</i>	Tree	No	Can grow 20' x 15-20'
Necklace Pod	<i>Sophora tomentosa</i>	Shrub	Yes	Salt & drought tolerant
Firespike	<i>Odontonema strictum</i>	Herbaceous perennial	No	Spikes of fire-red tubular flowers, hummingbird attractor
Clerodendrum 'Blue Wings'	<i>Clerodendrum ugandense</i>	Vine	No	Not salt tolerant

Table 4. Plants in the Home Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida native	Notes
Lantana	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	Salt tolerant, fast growing, butterfly attractor, waterwise, South American native, woody groundcover, almost continuous flowering
Schillings Holly	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	Hardy, prunes well, 3-4', moderate growth, forms natural ball shape
Fire bush	<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	Heavy feeder, graceful open bush, prefers damp places, drought tolerant
Cardboard Palm	<i>Zamia furfuracea</i>	Shrub, evergreen	No	Salt resistant, prefers well drained, sandy soil, coarse texture, spreading, loose habit
Dwarf Crepe Myrtle	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Tall shrub, tree	No	Asia native, conical clusters of crinkled flowers

Table 5. Plants in the Pond Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida native	Notes
Red Fountain Grass	<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>	Grass, evergreen	No	Bearded stalks with purple cast, any soil
Coral Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Vine, evergreen	Yes	Salt tolerant, full sun to part shade, orange-red flowers, several cultivars available
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Shrub	Yes	Hardy, heat tolerant, full sun to part shade, pest and disease resistant, purple flowers and, clumps of berries
Lantana	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	Shrub	No	Salt tolerant, fast growing, butterfly attractor, waterwise, South American native, woody groundcover, almost continuous flowering
African Iris	<i>Moraea iridioides</i>	Ground cover	No	Remove seed pods to encourage more flowers
African Bush Daisy	<i>Gamolepis chrysanthemoides</i>	Ground cover	No	Reseeds itself

Table 6. Plants in the Shade Garden.

Common name	Botanical name	Plant type	Florida native	Notes
Coontie	<i>Zamia floridana</i>	Shrub, evergreen	Yes	1-3', slow grower, best in part shade, prefers well drained soil, densely foliated
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Shrub	Yes	Hardy, tolerates sandy soils, pest free, heat tolerant, full sun to part shade, pest and disease resistant, purple flowers and clumps of berries
Saw Palmetto	<i>Serenoa repens</i>	Palm, evergreen	Yes	Very salt tolerant, cold hardy, slow grower
Wild Coffee	<i>Psychotria undata</i>	Shrub	Yes	White inconspicuous flower
Bromeliads	<i>Tillandsia</i> spp.	Air plant	Yes	Rosette of long spiky leaves & central flower spike
Cast Iron Plant	<i>Aspidistra elatior</i>	Ground cover	Yes	Good shade plant
Liriope	<i>Liriope muscari</i>	Herbaceous perennial	No	Evergreen tufts