

FOLIAGE FOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS FROM YOUR FLORIDA GARDEN

A. A. WILL, JR.
Broward Community College, Central Campus,
Davie, FL 33314;
D. G. BURCH
4044 SW 4th Street
Plantation, FL 33317

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Abstract. A typical Florida garden can provide many attractive types of foliage for use with cut flowers without planting specifically for that purpose. A list of plant materials and suggestions for improving vase life are included.

The purchase of cut flowers for indoor decoration in Florida has increased dramatically during the past few years. Roadside vendors are now a common sight, and most supermarkets have areas set aside for flower sales. This interest in fresh cut flowers often leads to a search for foliage to accompany them. This is not always readily available at the point of purchase of the flowers.

Gardeners in Florida are accustomed to an abundance of interesting foliage types in their gardens. In fact, it is the rich variety of foliage colors, shapes, textures and sizes that allow the skilled designer to combine plants for a garden of year-round interest.

The same rich variety of leaf types can also turn a simple flower arrangement into something special, and a remarkable number of our garden favorites have foliage that has a vase life at least as long as that of most flowers. In fact, cut foliage from some of the plants commonly used in our gardens have long been major commercial items for florists everywhere, and are raised for sale with much the same care given to cut flower crops.

Foliage may be the armature on which the whole design is built, or may simply add interest as a filler or as a complement to the flowers. The shape or form of the leaves may be just right as they are, or large leaves may be cut to shape to give a particular effect. The only rule which applies is to do whatever is needed to make the flower arrangement work for the area in which it is to be placed.

Table 1 contains a list of ground covers, herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees, and is arranged in a loose descending order of leaf size. Many of the first ones are long and slender or sword shaped, next are broad types of various sizes and forms, and the list ends with small leaves that would usually be used as small branches. The list is, of course, not complete, and any foliage that is of an interesting size or form is worth trying.

Table 1. Garden plants suitable for cut foliage.

Long narrow leaves

<i>Agave americana</i>	Century Plant
<i>Alpinia</i> spp.	Ginger
<i>Anthurium</i> spp.	Anthurium
<i>Aspidistra elatior</i>	Cast-iron Plant
<i>Belamcanda chinensis</i>	Blackberry Lily
<i>Calathea</i> spp.	
<i>Cordyline terminalis</i>	Ti Plant
<i>Crinum</i> spp.	

<i>Curculigo capitulata</i>	Palm Grass
<i>Dracaena</i> spp.	
<i>Heliconia</i> spp.	Heliconia
<i>Marica gracilis</i>	
<i>Moraea iridioides</i>	
<i>Pandanus</i> spp.	Screwpine
<i>Rhoeo discolor</i>	Moses-in-the-bulrushes
<i>Sansevieria</i> spp.	Snake Plant
<i>Strelitzia reginae</i>	Bird of Paradise
<i>Trimezia martinicensis</i>	Walking Iris
<i>Yucca</i> spp.	
<i>Zingiber</i> spp.	
Compound leaves (Fronds)	
<i>Chamaedorea</i> spp.	Bamboo Palm, Neanthe Bella
<i>Chrysalidocarpus lutescens</i>	Areca Palm
<i>Cycas circinnalis</i>	Sago Palm
<i>Cycas revoluta</i>	Sago Palm
<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	Holly Fern
<i>Nephrolepis</i> spp.	Boston Fern
<i>Phoenix roebelenii</i>	Pygmy Date Palm
<i>Polypodium</i> spp.	
<i>Rhapis</i> spp.	Lady Palm
<i>Zamia</i> spp.	Coontie
Broad leaves	
<i>Acalypha</i> spp.	Jacob's Coat
<i>Aglaonema</i> cvs.	
<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Golddust Plant
<i>Cecropia</i> spp.	
<i>Clusia rosea</i>	Signature Plant
<i>Codiaeum variegatum</i>	Croton
<i>Dieffenbachia</i> spp.	Dumbcane
<i>Gordonia lasianthus</i>	Loblolly Bay
<i>Macadamia</i> spp.	
<i>Monstera deliciosa</i>	Monstera
Small leaves (usually cut as branches)	
<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>	Norfolk Island Pine
<i>Asparagus</i> spp.	
<i>Buxus</i> spp.	
<i>Callistemon</i> spp.	Bottlebrush
<i>Carissa macrocarpa</i>	Natal Plum
<i>Casuarina</i> spp.	Australian Pine
<i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i>	Cocoplum
<i>Citrus</i> spp.	
<i>Cocculus laurifolius</i>	Snailseed
<i>Coleus</i> cvs.	
<i>Cyperus alternifolius</i>	Dwarf Papyrus
<i>Cyperus papyrus</i>	Papyrus
<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i>	
<i>Ervatamia</i> spp.	Crepe Jessamine
<i>Eucalyptus</i> spp.	
<i>Eugenia uniflora</i>	Barbados Cherry
<i>Euonymus</i> sp.	
<i>Feijoa sellowiana</i>	Pineapple Guava
<i>Gardenia jasminoides</i>	Gardenia
<i>Grevillea robusta</i>	Silk Oak
<i>Ilex</i> spp.	Jasmine
<i>Juniperus</i> spp.	Privet
<i>Murraya paniculata</i>	Orange Jessamine
<i>Myrtus communis</i>	Myrtle
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander
<i>Osmanthus</i> spp.	Tea Holly
<i>Pilea cadierei</i>	Aluminum Plant
<i>Pinus</i> spp.	Pine
<i>Pittosporum tobira</i>	
<i>Podocarpus</i> spp.	Aralia
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	Bird Cherry
<i>Psidium littorale</i>	Cattley Guava
<i>Pyracantha</i> spp.	
<i>Raphiolepis umbellata</i>	Indian Hawthorn
<i>Russelia equisetiformis</i>	Firecracker
<i>Schefflera arboricola</i>	Dwarf Schefflera
<i>Thuja</i> spp.	Arbor Vitae
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	

In general plants with leathery leaves are more likely to have a long vase life, and branches cut when a new flush of growth has matured will probably last longer than those cut when new leaves have just formed. Vase life is also affected by the treatment of the foliage after cutting. The best time to cut is when the leaves are full of water rather than in the middle of a hot dry day. Commercial producers usually cut into a bucket of water, and the stems are usually recut, with the cut end under water, as they are being arranged. Smashing the bottom inch of the stem with a heavy weight is often recommended with the idea of increasing water uptake, but not everyone agrees that this is

effective, and it may actually impede uptake by damaging the cells through which the water enters. All containers should be washed thoroughly between uses to prevent the growth of bacteria that can interfere with the entry of water into the stem and leaves. Some of the materials recommended as treatments for the water for cut flowers may be worth trying—a little sugar, an aspirin tablet, and proprietary substances such as 'Chrysal' have all been used, but their effect is not predictable, and there is still room for a lot of experimentation on the variety of foliage waiting to be tried.

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THE FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM: HOW SPECIALISTS CAN TAILOR TRAINING CLASSES

K. M. DELATE
Vegetable Crops Department
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
JANET B. TUCKER
Anthropology Department
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611

Abstract. State extension specialists and county extension personnel with commercial extension responsibilities are often asked to participate in training classes for the Florida Master Gardener program. Slide-tape sets have been prepared for some aspects of the training, but others need to be adapted to the specific needs of the county in which the training class is being held. Dade and Monroe Counties, for instance, have unique soils and a climate which allows gardeners to cultivate subtropical and tropical species which do not grow well in other parts of Florida. Master Gardeners are frequently asked questions about the production of these species and so would benefit from specially tailored training programs. State extension specialists and commercial horticulture agents in Dade County have begun to meet this need for Dade County's Master Gardeners.

Program Overview

The Florida Master Gardener program enters its seventh year, having trained over 1,800 volunteers in horticulture science to assist county Cooperative Extension staff with their increasing homeowner load. Once trained, Master Gardeners (MGs) volunteer 50 to 100 hours of service per year to the county Extension Service through various projects, ranging from telephone duty to community gardens (3). The reported number of contacts from Master Gardener activities was 62,000 for 1985 in the 34 counties that have held MG training.

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The MG program has proven to be a tremendous asset to the Extension Service by providing the county agent or MG coordinator with a method of structuring specific activities for the homeowner target audience through MG training and their subsequent horticultural programs and activities.

Materials and Methods

The information for this paper was gathered by formal telephone interviews with county Master Gardener coordinators as well as by mail-out questionnaires and routine files on county MG program. Thirty counties were contacted by telephone survey and, of those, 22 had trained more than one group of Master Gardeners. Thirty-three questionnaires were mailed to supplement the telephone surveys, resulting in 15 responses. Due to a variety of reasons, some MG coordinators did not provide data on training hours; however, 19 county programs are reported in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

Instructors Change

During the beginning years of the program, both instructors and instruction material for the MG basic training consisted of IFAS extension specialists from Gainesville and the Agricultural Research and Education Centers and selected IFAS Extension circulars and fact sheets.

Slide-tape sets have also been prepared for the majority of the 13 subjects covered in the basic training. These teaching materials were also prepared by IFAS extension specialists. Greater attention to specific local horticultural conditions had been identified by MGs and coordinators as a training need for the program. Thus, the local county MG coordinator (an agent or paraprofessional) began teaching most of the classes. Expansion of the program into a greater number of counties, and limited travel budgets for state specialists also exacerbated the need for local instructors.

Today, county Master Gardener coordinators (extension agents and/or paraprofessionals) present the majority of the MG basic training, supplemented by various local experts. By horticultural specialists or experts, we are re-