



NATIVE PLANT DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

The Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Bonnet Springs Park is in the heart of the AgAmerica Heritage Gardens. It highlights the beauty and ecological function of Florida's native wildflowers and plants. The garden supports native pollinators, provides habitat for wildlife at the Park, and gives practical examples of how a garden full of native plants may look in your yard.



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|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Pineland Lantana | American Beautyberry | Blue Mistflower | Bahama Senna |
| Grayleaf Teabush | Snow Squarestem | Buttonsage | Oblongleaf Twinflower |
| Dense Blazing Star | Leavenworth's Tickseed | Giant Ironweed | Spotted Beebalm |
| Seaside Goldenrod | False Rosemary | | |

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SPOTTED BEEBALM
Monarda Punctata



GRAYLEAF TEABUSH
Melochia tomentosa



BAHAMA SENNA
Senna mexicana



FALSE ROSEMARY
Conradina canescens



OBLONGLEAF TWINFLOWER
Dyschoriste Oblongifolia



BLUE MISTFLOWER
Conoclinium coelestinum



SEASIDE GOLDENROD
Solidago sempervirens



DENSE BLAZING STAR
Liatris spicata



GIANT IRONWEED
Vernonia gigantea



SNOW SQUARESTEM
Melanthera nivea



PINELAND LANTANA
Lantana depressa



AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY
Callicarpa americana



BUTTONSAGE
Lantana involucrata



PINK RAIN LILY
Zephyranthes Atamasca



LEAVENWORTH'S TICKSEED
Coreopsis leavenworthii



WHAT ARE NATIVE PLANTS?

Florida native plants are species that were present before European contact, based on the most reliable scientific and historical records. This includes indigenous species that thrive in natural environments that existed before major human influence and changes to the landscape.



Why are native plants important?

Native plants play a crucial role in their ecosystems. An ecosystem is a community of organisms (plants and animals) interacting with their physical environment (air, water, soil, and sunlight). Every garden is an ecosystem. Native plants are better suited to their environment than non-native plants and provide essential food and shelter for wildlife. They also help conserve water, reduce soil erosion, and generally require less maintenance compared to non-native species. All these traits make them vital for sustainable landscaping, a method where minimal and environmentally-friendly resources are used to maintain land.

Pollinators, such as Florida native bees (Examples include: American bumblebee, Southeastern blueberry bee, and sweat bee), bats, butterflies, and moths are responsible for pollinating about one-third of the plants that produce the food we eat. Unfortunately, in Florida, these populations are facing decline due to habitat destruction, pesticide application, and global warming. By offering the most suitable food sources and habitats tailored to Florida's pollinators, native plants are essential for their survival and the overall health of our ecosystems.

Do non-native plants damage the environment?

Many non-native plants live in harmony with native species and may offer environmental benefits. A non-native plant becomes harmful when it rapidly spreads and outcompetes native plants for resources.

What is an invasive plant?

A non-native plant becomes invasive when it breaks free from its original planting location and negatively impacts the environment, economy, or the health of humans, animals, or other plants.

How can invasive plants cause harm to the environment?

Invasive plants can quickly multiply and overshadow native plants, competing for essential resources such as sunlight, water, and nutrients. This competition disrupts the natural balance of ecosystems, resulting in decreased biodiversity, changed habitats, and potential harm to wildlife populations or even human economies. Wildlife relies on native plants for vital nutrients. Humans may spend a lot of money trying to eradicate invasive plants. Additionally, these plants often do not have natural predators in their new surroundings, enabling them to thrive unchecked, and they may create considerable disturbances in the ecosystem, such as the degradation of native plants.

Native Landscaping at your Home or Business

Why is native landscaping important?

- There are 418 endangered plant species in Florida; 104 of these plants are endemic, which means they are only found in Florida and nowhere else in the world.
- Invasive plants contribute to 42% of native plant species being endangered or threatened in the United States. For 18% of endangered native plant species, invasives are the main cause of their decline.
- The number of Florida native bees has dropped significantly in the last decade. Bees are important pollinators of native plants.

Where can I find native plants and landscaping tips?

- Search for growers, landscape professionals, services, and nurseries at the [Florida Association of Native Nurseries website](#)
- Check out the [Florida Native Plant Society](#) website for native plant lists
- Check out the [Florida Friendly Landscaping Program](#) for steps on how you can incorporate native plants at your home, commercial, or new construction landscape

How can I be recognized for a Florida-friendly landscape?

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program through the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) recognizes landscapes that implement sustainable practices. This includes reducing the use of drinking water for irrigation, preventing run-off from fertilizers or pesticides, and creating habitats for wildlife.

Check out the [Landscape Recognition](#) page on the Florida Friendly Landscaping Program website for more information about the program. You'll find a checklist to help assess your landscape, suggestions for improvements, and contact details for your local UF/IFAS extension office. You can then request a site evaluation and gain an official certification. If you live outside of Florida, contact your local extension office for more information.

SOURCES

[Florida Association of Native Nurseries](#)
[Florida Native Plant Society](#)
[Florida Wildflower Foundation](#)
[National Wildlife Federation](#)
[Plant Real Florida](#)

[University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences](#)
[United States Environmental Protection Agency](#)
[United States Forest Service](#)



The Native Plant Demonstration Garden at BSP was made possible thanks to funding from the Florida Wildflower Foundation, whose mission is to protect, connect, and expand native wildflower habitats through education, research, planting, and conservation.

Viva Florida Landscape Demonstration Garden grants bring native beauty to parks, nature centers, and other public spaces to highlight the beauty and ecological significance of Florida native plants. There are many of these demonstration gardens around the state. Thank you to the Florida Wildflower Foundation for their support of the Native Demonstration Garden. Visit the Florida Wildflower Foundation [website](#) for more information, resources, and information on their [grant programs](#).



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