

Native Landscape Plants for South Florida¹

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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, Florida native plants have in the past received a cool reception. In recent years, however, the positive features 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. The FYN program 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, sandy or limestone-based, often high-pH soils of south Florida. They also have for the most part few pest and disease problems and relatively low fertilizer requirements, and typically do not require frequent

maintenance (i.e., regular watering, pruning, or use of pesticides) 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. In addition, all landscape trees including Florida natives require, to varying degrees, appropriate routine pruning in order to encourage structurally sound growth. Any comments below regarding resistance to windstorms assume that an appropriate pruning program is in place.

A previous publication, ENH854 (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP107>), listed over 350 native and non-native low-maintenance plant species for south Florida landscapes. The present publication was developed as a supplement to ENH854, but also serves as a good stand-alone reference: both for those already committed to adding native plants to their private yards or public landscapes, and to others who simply wish to become better acquainted with the range of south Florida native plants available for cultivation.

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Benefits of Native Plants

While few of south Florida's native plants offer the striking floral display seen in many tropical exotics, most 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 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 attention, providing 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 south Florida native plants in local garden centers, the range of species is usually extremely limited. With many local ordinances requiring an increasing percentage of native plants in new landscapes, it is to be hoped that this will eventually stimulate the availability of a more diverse range of south Florida natives in area garden centers. A list of retail and wholesale nurseries in south Florida that currently sell native plants is available on the Miami-Dade County Extension Web site. In addition, check local plant shows, rambles and native plant societies in your area. The Adopt-a-Tree program in Miami-Dade County, which offers free trees to county homeowners, always includes some that are native to south Florida.

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 calcareous Rockland 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, where it is susceptible to *Diaprepes* weevil larvae. However it grows well on Miami limestone, where it is found naturally as an understory component of pine Rockland. Conversely, the paurotis palm (*Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*) is found in wet, peaty soils of the Everglades and grows poorly in the limestone and alkaline sandy soils found in most metro areas of south Florida. Notes on soil conditions prevailing in each plant's natural habitat are included as an aid to assessing its suitability for a particular landscaping site.

Native Plant Categories

The 146 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, typical height, light preference, salt tolerance, distinguishing characteristics, and culture recommendations.

Doubt has been raised concerning the status of certain plants as being native to south Florida. It is beyond the scope of this document to enter into a discussion as to what constitutes a Florida native plant (see Norcini 2006). In choosing which plants qualify as south Florida natives, we have been guided by the "Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants" and lists prepared by the Institute for Regional Conservation. Omitted from this publication, therefore, are items such as the Geiger tree (*Cordia sebestena*), golden dewdrop (*Duranta repens*) and black olive (*Bucida buceras*), each of which has on occasion been referred to as a Florida native.

As taxonomists attempt to develop more logical schemes of plant classification, scientific names are liable to change. The present publication uses those scientific names currently accepted in the USDA Plants Data Base: <http://plants.usda.gov>.

Native Plant Resources

Association of Florida Native Nurseries website:
<http://www.afnn.org>.

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

Common name <i>Scientific name</i>	Size (inches)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Climbing aster <i>Ampelaster carolinianus</i> Syn <i>Symphytotrichum carolinianum</i>	[~10']	Full sun to shade	Low	Fast growing, climbing, woody-stemmed perennial with bluish lavender flowers. Prefers moist, sandy soils with some organic matter. Limited drought tolerance. Flowers principally in fall, after which it should be heavily cut back.
Butterfly weed * <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	18-36	Full sun to light shade	Low	Perennial wildflower with orange summertime flowers; occurs in open pineland. Essential component of a butterfly garden; also attracts hummingbirds. Free-draining calcareous or sandy soils. Drought tolerant.
Seaside oxeye * <i>Borrchia arborescens</i>	24-48	Full sun	High	Low, spreading, shrubby plant with yellow, daisy-like flowers and succulent leaves. Drought tolerance limited; prefers sandy, moist but free-draining soil. Best for ocean front sites – inland prone to root rots on garden soil.
Silver oxeye * <i>Borrchia frutescens</i>	24-48	Full sun	High	Similar to <i>B. arborescens</i> , but more cold tolerant (occurs the length of coastal Florida). Silvery foliage and a less upright stature. Sandy soils but with slightly more organic matter.
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. Requires moist sandy soils, limited drought tolerance. Poorly adapted to Miami limestone.
Twinflower * <i>Dyschoriste oblongifolia</i>	8-12	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Small, sprawling perennial that, under favorable conditions, can form a limited groundcover. Delicate stems bear fine-textured leaves and small purple flowers. Sandy or limestone based soils; highly drought tolerant.
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. Often grows in marshy areas but is highly drought tolerant. Can be deadheaded after flowering to improve appearance. May become weedy.
Indian blanket <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	12-18	Full sun	High	Colorful annual or short-lived perennial. Considerable variation in flower color; typically bears red flowers with yellow-tipped petals. Plant in open site with good drainage. Good choice for sandy coastal sites.
Beach sunflower <i>Helianthus debilis</i> *	12-24	Full sun	High	Erect or prostrate, spreading plant with sandpaper-like leaves and 2 to 3" yellow sunflowers. Ideal for beachfront plantings, but can decline inland if soil is too rich or site has imperfect drainage. The subsp. <i>vestitus</i> is endemic to Florida's west coast.
Pineland heliotrope <i>Heliotropium polyphyllum</i>	6-12	Full sun to partial shade	High	Sparse, partly erect or prostrate, slowly spreading perennial composed of thin stems, terminal scorpioid inflorescence bearing tiny yellow flowers. Prefers moist sandy/calcareous soils low in organic matter, but is highly drought tolerant. White-flowering form found on Florida's west coast.

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Pineland lantana <i>Lantana depressa</i>	24-48	Full sun	High	Low, sprawling, woody shrublet with small, yellow flowers that attract a variety of butterflies. Calcareous to sandy soils. Highly drought tolerant. Most plants offered for sale have hybridized to varying degrees in the wild with the invasive exotic <i>L. camara</i>
Beach peanut <i>Okenia hypogaea</i>	6-72	Full sun	High	Trailing annual with opposite paired leaves of unequal size having wavy, sinuate margins. Attractive magenta flowers; stalks curve down and fruit develops under soil surface. Sandy soil; best for beachfront sites. Highly tolerant of drought. A decidedly transient member of the landscape.
Pennyroyal <i>Piloblephis rigida</i>	6-24	Full sun	Low	Low-growing perennial of sandy pinelands with small, shrimp-like flowers emerging from green, scale-like bracts. Attractive to butterflies Not fussy about soil as long as it is on the dry side.
Silkgrass * <i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i> Proposed name change to <i>Heterotheca graminifolia</i>	24-36	Full sun	Low	Herbaceous perennial with silvery, silky stems, grass-like basal leaves, and small, terminal yellow flowers. Sandy/calcareous soils low in organic matter. Highly drought tolerant.
Black-eyed Susan * <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	24-36	Full sun to light shade	Low	Annual or short-lived perennial; large, deep yellow flowers with dark brown centers. Free-draining sandy or calcareous soils low in organic matter. Does not tolerate prolonged, wet weather when grown in improved garden soils. Highly drought tolerant. Attracts butterflies.
Thickleaf wild petunia <i>Ruellia succulenta</i>	12-18	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Herbaceous perennial of pineland understory with blue/pink, petunia-like flowers year-round. Free-draining calcareous/sandy soils. <i>Ruellia caroliniensis</i> has similar flowers but thinner leaves; may volunteer but not as invasive as common <i>Ruellia (R. tweediana)</i> .
Blue-eyed grass <i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>	12-18	Full sun	Low	Grass-like herbaceous plant in the Iris family with attractive yellow- centered bluish-purple flowers. Prefers moist, sandy/calcareous soils; limited drought tolerance.
Pineland or sweet goldenrod <i>Solidago odora v. chapmanii</i>	12-24	Full sun to light shade	Moderate	Erect perennial with slender stems topped summer/fall by brilliant yellow flowers. Free-draining sandy/calcareous soils. Highly drought tolerant. Best if deadheaded in winter.
Seaside goldenrod <i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	36-48	Full sun	High	Tall, erect herbaceous perennial similar to <i>S. odora</i> , but much tighter flower spike. Moist, sandy to calcareous soils with some organic matter. Slightly less tolerant of drought than pineland goldenrod.
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. Free-draining calcareous or sandy soils. Highly drought tolerant. Exotic <i>S. cayennensis</i> (syn. <i>S. urticifolia</i>) is a taller (4-6') more shrubby plant which is often confused with the native species, with which it readily hybridizes.

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Pineland pinklet <i>Stenandrium dulce</i>	2-6	Full sun to deep shade	Low	Tiny, dwarf perennial with a basal rosette of leaves, from which short stems arise bearing small pink flowers. May eventually spread to form groundcover, but cannot tolerate competition from other plants. Moist sandy to calcareous soils low in organic matter. Limited drought tolerance.
Scale leaf aster <i>Symphotrichum adnatum</i> Syn. <i>Aster adnatus</i>	6-24	Full sun to light shade	Low	Perennial wildflower with a distinctive growth habit, forming a clump of loose, wiry stems bearing numerous small, scale-like leaves and lavender flowers. Sandy or calcareous soils low in organic matter.
Rain lilies * <i>Zephyranthes</i> spp	6	Full sun	Low	Of the Florida native rain lilies, Simpson's zephyr lily, <i>Z. simpsonii</i> (white flowers), is found in central, and parts of south Florida; it is endangered and of limited distribution (commercially unavailable). <i>Z. atamasco</i> (white flowers) is restricted to north to central Florida and is commercially available. Rain lilies require some shade, acidic soil, and, when in active growth, plenty of moisture. They are dormant in winter.

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

Common name <i>Scientific name</i>	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Spineless acacia, cinnecord * <i>Acacia choriophylla</i> Syn. <i>A. choriophylloides</i> .	20-25'	Full sun	High	Considered endangered in Florida; limited to Florida Keys and Miami-Dade (escape). Small, open, multi-trunk tree with bipinnate leaves; leaflets much larger than other native acacias. Yellowish, globose inflorescences. Minute stipular spines. Moist to dry sandy/ calcareous soils. Drought tolerant. Adaptable and amenable to pruning.
Sweet acacia * <i>Acacia farnesiana</i>	15	Full sun	High	Small tree with yellow sweet-smelling, "pom-pom like" inflorescences. Needs free-draining sandy/calcareous soils – prone to root rots on improved garden soils. Highly drought tolerant. Occurs mostly in southwest Florida.
Pineland acacia <i>Acacia pinetorum</i> Proposed name change <i>Vachellia farnesiana</i> var. <i>pinetorum</i>	4-10	Full sun	High	Dwarf, spiny shrub with delicate, gray to gray-green, bipinnate leaves. Inflorescences yellow, globulose, with pervasive sweet fragrance. Calcareous or sandy soils. Highly drought tolerant. Ideal as barrier shrubs

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Mexican alvaradoa <i>Alvaradoa amorphoides</i>	10-35	Full sun to light shade	Low	An open, airy, shrub/slender small tree; pinnate leaves, each with up to 40 small, thin, rounded leaflets. Dioecious; flowers (winter) in 3 to 4" pendant spikes, with red flushed winged fruits (samara) containing a single seed on female flowering trees. Sandy or calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant. Endangered in Florida and of limited availability; should be more widely used.
Torchwood <i>Amyris elemifera</i>	8-15	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Shrub or small tree in the citrus family. Bark gray to brown. Aromatic compound leaves; leaflets dark, shiny green. Terminal clusters of small fragrant white flowers (spring to fall) followed by purplish fruit. Free-draining but moist sandy or calcareous soils containing some organic matter. Moderately drought tolerant.
Marlberry * <i>Ardisia escallonioides</i>	5-20	Partial shade	High	Upright shrub to small tree with a narrow canopy; attractive foliage and berries. Can also be used as an informal screen. Does poorly in day-long full sun. Free-draining sandy or calcareous soil containing some organic matter. Moderately drought tolerant – prefers evenly moist soil. Attracts birds. Do not confuse with invasive exotic shoe button ardisia, <i>A. elliptica</i>
Bahama Strongback * <i>Bouyeria succulenta</i> Syn. <i>B. ovata</i>	20	Full sun to light shade	High	With part shade, growth more upright; in full sun sprawls to form a large shrub; numerous small, white flowers followed by orange berries that attract birds. Also mistakenly- known as strongbark. Sandy or calcareous soil with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Locustberry* <i>Byrsonima lucida</i>	18	Full sun to light shade	Moderate	Large shrub or occasionally a small tree with many erect stems. Leaves leathery, oblanceolate, mid-vein prominent. Clusters of white to pink flowers becoming yellow to brick red. Calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content; must be free draining. Susceptible to over watering in garden soils. Highly drought tolerant.
Beautyberry * <i>Callicarpa americana</i>	6-8	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	"Leggy" shrub, especially when grown in shade. Flowers are insignificant; grown for the showy long-lasting purple berries; a favorite food source of birds. More attractive if cut back hard in late winter to stimulate new growth. Sandy or calcareous soil with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Spicewood* <i>Calypttranthes 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. Free-draining calcareous soils with some organic content; preferably moist but moderately drought tolerant.

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Cinnamon bark* <i>Canella winterana</i>	10-30	Full sun to light shade	High	One of south Florida's most ornamental trees: slow-growing with a dense, broad crown; thick, aromatic leaves; fragrant, pinkish red to violet flowers; and purplish red berries. Inner bark has cinnamon-like aroma. Limestone-based, free-draining soils containing some organic matter; prefers evenly moist soil but moderate drought tolerance. Suitable for coastal sites away from ocean front.
Jamaica caper * <i>Capparis cynophallophora</i>	18	Full sun to partial shade	High	Slow-growing shrub that can be limbed up and used as a narrow, compact small tree. Given time in full sun, the dense foliage makes for an excellent privacy screen. Attractive white to pink, fragrant flowers with exerted stamens opening night into following morning. Free-draining sandy or calcareous soils with some organic matter. An occasional application of organic fertilizer beneficial. Highly drought tolerant. Good for coastal sites.
Limber caper * <i>Capparis flexuosa</i>	12-25	Full sun to part shade	High	Usually seen as a scandent shrub; requires support – can be allowed to clamber into a nearby tree. Flowers (see <i>C. cynophallophora</i>) in spring followed by beanlike fruit capsules in summer or fall. (Soils – see <i>C. cynophallophora</i>)
Bird pepper <i>Capsicum annuum</i> var. <i>glabriusculum</i>	1.5-3	Full sun to part shade	Low	Dwarf, dense, evergreen shrub with glossy, dark green leaves and tiny, extremely hot peppers which are highly attractive to birds. Grown by early settlers to south Florida. Free-draining calcareous or alkaline, sandy soils, preferably moist but moderately drought tolerant.
Cocoplum * <i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i>	3-15	Full sun to partial shade	High (but see notes)	Shrub to small tree with coriaceous shiny leaves and edible fruit. Often used as a clipped hedge but more attractive as a tall informal screen; Thins out if planted in too much shade. Pineland form is sold as 'Red Tip' and has red new leaves. The cv. 'Horizontal' is a low-growing (3- to 4'), salt-tolerant, coastal form more able to withstand drought and better suited to seaside locations. Lobate lac scale can be a problem.
Snowberry* <i>Chiococca alba</i>	10-15	Full sun	Moderate	Shrub or rarely small tree with vine-like stems, glossy green, elliptical to lanceolate leaves, and tiny yellowish flowers scentless at first, becoming more fragrant as they age. Striking milky white berries. Keep pruned – unchecked it can grow into adjacent plants. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic matter, preferably moist; moderately drought tolerant.
Pineland Snowberry <i>Chiococca parvifolia</i> Some authorities regard <i>C. parvifolia</i> to be synonymous with <i>C. alba</i>	1 – 10	Full sun to light shade	Low	Similar to <i>C. alba</i> but smaller leaves, white flowers and trailing habit – can be used as a ground cover. Primarily found in Miami -Dade (calcareous Rockland soils). Climbing form also recorded.

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Fiddlewood * <i>Citharexylum spinosum</i> (syn. <i>C. fruticosum</i>)	12-30	Full sun to partial shade	Medium	Small, graceful tree or large shrub with glossy, elliptical leaves and pendant racemes of small, white, fragrant flowers. Female plants bear orange-brown berries that attract birds and other wildlife. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic matter; preferably moist but some drought tolerance.
Pigeon plum * <i>Coccoloba diversifolia</i>	5-30	Full sun to partial shade	High	Large dioecious shrub to small tree with dense, columnar, evergreen crown and attractive, peeling bark. Dark purple berries on female flowering trees attract birds. Calcareous or sandy soils with organic content, preferably moist but some drought tolerance; organic fertilizer of benefit on nutrient-deficient soils. Weevils may disfigure leaves.
Sea grape * <i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	10-50	Full sun	High	Large shrub/spreading tree; leaves red-veined, outsized, orbicular and leathery. Dioecious: edible fruit on female flowering plants. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant. Fallen leaves can be messy and are slow to decompose. Susceptible to several insect pests.
Coffee colubrina * <i>Colubrina arborescens</i>	20	Full sun to light shade	High	Large, erect, somewhat coarse shrub /small tree with open crown; rust-colored hairs on stems/leaf undersides. Inconspicuous, fragrant green flowers, and 3-seeded capsules. Exposed limestone or calcareous sandy soils, preferably with some organic matter. Drought tolerant but grows best with moist soil.
Buttonwood * <i>Conocarpus erectus</i>	5-50	Full sun to light shade	High	Usually seen as small, open, low-branching tree or shrub. Used as a clipped hedge – the cv. 'Momba', with larger leaves and tighter growth used as a shade tree. An excellent support for orchids and bromeliads Silver leaved form May be referenced as <i>C. erectus</i> var. <i>sericeus</i> but varietal status in doubt. more attractive but overused; can be disfigured by scale insects and sooty mold. Susceptible to root weevils on marl soil. Exposed limestone to sandy soils. Tolerates all but the most severe drought.
Bloodberry* <i>Cordia globosa</i>	4-9	Full sun to light shade	Low	Rounded, densely branched shrub with somewhat wiry stems; small, bright green, lanceolate to elliptic leaves with serrated margins. Clusters of diminutive white flowers followed by small, brilliant red berries. Attracts butterflies and bees. Can be clipped and used as a low hedge. Quickly grows into adjacent shrubs if spaced too close. Seedling volunteers. Exposed limestone or calcareous sandy soils; drought tolerant but prefers evenly moist soil. Newly introduced leaf hopper reported as causing serious damage.
Rhacoma <i>Crossopetalum rhacoma</i>	1.5-6	Full sun to light shade	High	Shrub or multi-stemmed small tree; 1"-inch, oval, leathery leaves; insignificant flowers; ornamental fruit – bright red drupes. Exposed limestone to sandy soils. Tolerates all but the most severe drought.

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Varnish leaf * <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> Widely distributed in tropical, sub-tropical and warm temperate regions of the world, and of highly variable appearance – several sub species recognized.	18	Full sun to partial shade	High	Fast-growing, large, upright shrub or occasionally small tree; attractive flaking bark; leaves shiny (new growth appears lacquered). Fruit a papery, 3-winged capsule tinged pink to red produced in terminal clusters. Used as free-standing specimen or informal hedge. Excellent for beachfront. Sandy soils; highly drought tolerant.
Coral bean * <i>Erythrina herbacea</i>	3-15	Full sun to light shade	Medium	Variable appearance: low multi-stemmed shrub to open irregularly branching tree. Deciduous, trifoliolate leaves. Showy erect racemes of scarlet flowers on new wood (winter/spring) followed by 8" pods that split to reveal bright red seeds. Cut back hard after flowering to control straggly growth. Sandy or calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Caution: stems covered with recurved prickles; poisonous; erythrina gall wasp a serious potential pest.
White stopper * <i>Eugenia axillaris</i>	5-20	Full sun to partial shade	Medium	Small tree with pale, whitish bark and aromatic foliage (overpowering to some - plant away from house). Small, white flowers in midsummer are followed by purplish berries. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Somewhat drought tolerant. Attractive to birds.
Redberry stopper* <i>Eugenia confusa</i>	6-18	Full sun to partial shade	High	Very 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. Sandy or calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Somewhat drought tolerant.
Spanish stopper * <i>Eugenia foetida</i>	18-36	Full sun to partial shade	High	Large shrub or small tree with narrow canopy of 1 1/2", rounded leaves. Flowers less prominent than other stoppers. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Somewhat drought tolerant. Excellent as a tall informal hedge or single specimen shrub.
Red stopper* <i>Eugenia rhombea</i>	10	Light shade to full sun	Moderate	Smooth, light grey bark and elegant growth habit with tight canopy of 2 to 3" shiny oval leaves with apiculate tips. Slow-growing and does not flower/fruit as a young plant. Limestone-based soils, preferably with some organic content. Somewhat drought tolerant but prefers evenly moist soils.
Inkwood <i>Exothea paniculata</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Evergreen shrub to medium tree with narrow, dense, erect growth habit. Bark gray; compound leaves of 2-4, shiny, dark green leaflets. Small clusters of insignificant, fragrant, white flowers. Wood very strong. Sap turns black when exposed to air. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Somewhat drought tolerant but prefers evenly moist soils.

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

Florida privet* <i>Forestiera segregata</i>	10	Full sun	High	Bushy shrub or much-branched tree with multiple trunks; insignificant flowers. Fruit a black drupe that attracts wildlife. Can be used as tall hedge plant in place of ligustrum. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant. Readily grows from seed.
Seven year apple* <i>Genipa clusiifolia</i> Some authorities retain <i>Casasia clusiifolia</i> as the scientific name.	15	Full sun to light shade	High	A much-branched large shrub, rarely a small tree. Leaves coriaceous, to 6", obovate and shiny. Fragrant, white, star-shaped flower; fruit a large, egg-shaped berry turning black. Calcareous or sandy soil with some organic content. Some drought tolerance but best with evenly moist soil. Can be prone to leaf spots.
Lignum vitae* <i>Guaiaacum sanctum</i>	6-25	Full sun	High	A most attractive, but very slow-growing, large shrub to small tree, with a short contorted trunk and rounded crown of shiny compound leaves. Deep blue flowers primarily in spring; fruit a yellow capsule splitting open to reveal prominent black seeds surrounded by a bright red aril. Extremely dense oily wood. Calcareous soil preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Firebush* <i>Hamelia patens</i> The varietal form <i>glabra</i> sometimes offered as African firebush is not native to Florida (but Mexico and Central America) and is distinguished by almost hairless leaves and a denser growth habit.	5-15	Partial shade to dappled sun	Low	An open shrub (in full sun) to small tree (in part shade). Showy helicoid cyme of tubular orange/red flowers year-round. Stems brittle and easily broken. Highly attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds. Sandy or calcareous soils, preferably with some organic matter (responds well to organic fertilizer). Drought tolerant but looks more attractive where soil is evenly moist.
Joewood* <i>Jacquinia keyensis</i>	10	Full sun to partial shade	High	Very slow-growing shrub; rarely as a low-branching small tree. Stiff, pale green, leathery leaves having revolute margins, clustered at stem tips. Terminal inflorescences of fragrant white flowers; firm, pale orange berries. Establishes best away from competing plants. Saline, sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Drought tolerant Good resistance to wind and salt spray. 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	Medium	Upright, woody shrub; leaves 1 1/2" scabrous, gray-green, with shallowly toothed margins – sage-like smell when bruised. Clusters of small, fragrant white flowers. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.

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

Christmas berry* <i>Lycium carolinianum</i>	9	Full sun	High	Open shrub; often spiny toward stem tips. Small, fleshy, club-shaped leaves. Flowers (fall) in clusters, pale blue; fruit (winter) highly ornamental dark red berries. Sandy to calcareous soils with some organic content. Moderate drought tolerance but prefers evenly moist soils. Ideal for moist coastal sites. Spreads by means of basal suckers.
Morinda, Cheese shrub <i>Morinda royoc</i>	5-10	Full sun to partial shade	High	Scandent shrub with long, thin leaves, small whitish to reddish flowers, and distinct, yellowish fruit (syncarp, resembles a mulberry) that smells of cheese when bruised. Of limited ornamental appeal but excellent butterfly attractant. Sandy or calcareous soils. Tolerant of all but the most severe drought.
Simpson's stopper * <i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i>	6-20	Full sun to partial shade	High	Densely branched, erect small tree or shrub with narrow columnar crown. Smooth, reddish, flaking bark; small, aromatic leaves; pure white, puffy flowers followed by large, bright orange berries that attract birds. Sandy or calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Prefers evenly moist soil but can survive limited drought.
Wax myrtle * <i>Myrica cerifera</i>	10-25	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Fast-growing shrub to small tree with narrow, waxy, aromatic leaves; flowers insignificant; fruit- waxy/ pruinose, dark blue drupe. Prefers moist, slightly acidic sandy soils with some organic content but can adapt if more calcareous. Tolerates periodic flooding but only short-term drought. Especially prone to lac scale, also dieback. Appearance extremely variable, forms root suckers especially dwarf forms ('Suwanee Elf'). Attracts birds.
Myrsine* <i>Myrsine cubana</i> Syns: <i>Rapanea punctata</i> , <i>Myrsine floridana</i>	25	Full sun to partial shade	Medium	Large shrub to small tree having pale gray bark and whorled, dark green, elliptic leaves with revolute margins. Flowers small, white, sometimes flushed purple. Berries dark purple or black. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic content. Prefers moist soils but tolerant of short periods of drought. Watch for lobate lac scale.
Lancewood* <i>Nectandra coriacea</i> Syn. <i>Ocotea coriacea</i>	15-25	Full sun to full shade	Low	Densely branched shrub, or ideal as a small shade tree with a narrow, rounded crown. Glossy, somewhat drooping, lanceolate leaves; highly aromatic when bruised. Flowers: white, fragrant in lax panicles. Fruit: purple to black drupes held in a reddish cup. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic content – in nutrient-poor soils, apply organic fertilizer. Highly drought tolerant.
Bitterbush* <i>Picramnia pentandra</i>	10-15	Full sun to part shade	Medium	Tough, shrubby tree with slender trunk and branches. Pinnate leaves with usually seven, 2- to 4" shiny leaflets. Dioecious; flowers on long, pendant inflorescences – attracts bees. Deep red berries on female flowering trees are a food source for wildlife. Leaves provide larval food for the bush sulfur butterfly. Sandy to calcareous sandy soils, preferably with some organic content. Drought tolerant.

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

Blackbead Cats claw, <i>P. unguis-cati</i> is more common in SW Florida; it is similar to <i>P. keyense</i> but with smaller leaflets and stems copiously armed with stipular spines. * <i>Pithecellobium keyense</i> Syn. <i>Pithecellobium guadalupense</i>	10-20	Full sun to partial shade	High	Large shrub or small tree with short trunk and very irregular growth habit. Leaves bipinnate; four leaflets. New growth tinged red or maroon. Small, mimosa-like, fragrant flowers are white to pink. Contorted bean pods split open to reveal black seeds covered with a fleshy red aril. Wood is weak. Sandy or calcareous soils preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Long-stalked stopper* <i>Psidium longipes</i> var. <i>longipes</i> Some authorities retain <i>Mosiera longipes</i>	3 - 12	Full sun to light shade	Low	Rather straggly shrub or rarely as a small tree; dark green, glossy leaves and pale green new growth. Small white flowers with exserted stamens. Fruit: a dark purple berry. Calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Tolerant of all but the most extended drought.
Bahama or privet-leaf wild coffee* <i>Psychotria ligustrifolia</i> Syn. <i>Psychotria bahamensis</i> .	4-8	Partial shade	Low	Infrequently branched medium shrub (rarely a small tree) with dark green, prominently veined, pointed leaves. Clusters of small white tubular flowers followed by conspicuous red berries, relished by birds. Calcareous soils with some organic content. Prefers moist soil but withstands limited periods of drought. Lac scale may be a problem
Wild coffee * <i>Psychotria nervosa</i>	4-6	Partial to light shade	Low	Similar to <i>P. ligustrifolia</i> but leaves glossy with more prominent venation. Flowers much smaller. Sandy or calcareous soils. Most commonly cultivated of the wild coffees.
Velvetleaf wild coffee * <i>Psychotria tenuifolia</i> Syn. <i>Psychotria sulzneri</i>	4-6	Partial shade	Low	Similar to <i>P. nervosa</i> , but with velvety, grayish-green foliage and hairy stems.
White indigoberry* <i>Randia aculeata</i>	1.5-10	Full sun to partial shade	High	A somewhat nondescript, low, spiny shrub in the open; with shade, growth is more tree-like and less spiny. Fragrant flowers. Female plants bear white drupes with deep blue pulp. Main attribute is as food/cover for wildlife and ability to grow under adverse conditions. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Darling plum* <i>Reynosia septentrionalis</i>	15-20	Full sun -light shade	Moderate	Large shrub or small tree with stiff stems. Leaves obovate, leathery, dull green approximately 1", margins revolute and apices notched. Insignificant yellow flowers followed by a purple drupe, the large single seed surrounded by a thin layer of soft, edible flesh. Calcareous soil with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant.
Rouge plant <i>Rivina humilis</i>	3-5	Light to partial shade	Low	Small to medium, herbaceous shrub. Thin, dark green, pointed leaves often with undulating margins. Tiny white/pale pink flowers in pendent racemes followed by bright red berries. Sandy to calcareous soils with some organic content; prefers moist soils but will survive limited drought. Can be weedy, especially in shade; more suited to woodland restoration.

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

American elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	10-15	Full sun to light shade	Low	Multi-stemmed shrub or small tree; compound leaves. Considered deciduous in more temperate climates, leaves are retained for the most part in south Florida, broad terminal clusters of tiny, star-shaped, sweet-smelling white flowers followed by edible, shiny, blue-black drupes. Requires moist to wet sandy soils, preferably with some organic content to thrive. Ideal for sites with poor drainage, however branches break easily, and dense thickets can form from root suckers.
Maidenbush <i>Savia bahamensis</i>	10-15	Full sun to light shade	High	Shrub or rarely a small tree having brownish stems and stiff, bright green, alternate leaves. Calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content; tolerant of drought if it is not prolonged.
Inkberry* <i>Scaevola plumieri</i>	2-4	Full sun	High	Low-growing shrub with small, rounded, fleshy leaves and insignificant but distinctive white flowers (one-sided as if half a flower). Trailing stems readily root, making this an ideal groundcover for beachfront. Sandy or calcareous soils. Highly drought tolerant.
Florida boxwood* <i>Schaefferia frutescens</i>	10-30	Light shade to full sun	Low	Erect shrub to small tree with angled green stems; stiff; shiny, light green, pointed leaves. Insignificant flowers; yellow to red fruit on female plants. Can be used as a tall, informal screen. Calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Tolerant of drought if not prolonged.
Bahama senna * <i>Senna mexicana var. chapmanii</i>	3-5	Full sun to partial shade	High	Fast-growing, low, sprawling shrub, with bipinnate leaves and terminal clusters of showy yellow flowers. Calcareous soils; tolerant of all but the most extended drought.
Saw palmetto * <i>Serenoa repens</i>	3-8	Full sun to partial shade	High	Clumping fan palm with prostrate or short upright trunks. One of the most abundant native palms in Florida. Green and silver forms available. Tendency to spread a potential problem if left uncontrolled. Petioles heavily armed. Sandy or calcareous soils. Highly drought tolerant. Food source for a wide variety of wildlife.
Willow bastic * <i>Sideroxylon salicifolium</i> Syns <i>Dolichos salicifolium</i> ; <i>Bumelia salicifolium</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Large shrub or medium tree with flaky grey bark and a narrow canopy of shiny, medium green, lanceolate leaves. Clusters of white, fragrant flowers borne on usually leafless stem sections. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic content. Very drought tolerant. Useful as a small shade tree
Necklace-pod * <i>Sophora tomentosa</i>	6	Full sun	High	Large, often leggy, sprawling shrub; rarely a small tree. Showy terminal spikes of bright yellow flowers followed by long stalked pod with pronounced constrictions between each seed. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic matter. Best used as background shrub – good choice for coastal sites. Seeds poisonous.

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

Bay cedar* <i>Suriana maritima</i>	6-12	Full sun	High	Low evergreen shrub, or a small tree in protected sites; leaves narrowly obovate, grey/green, sessile, fleshy and clustered at the ends of much branched stems. Dark brown, rough, peeling bark. Semi-showy yellow flowers often hidden by foliage. Sandy or calcareous soils. Highly drought tolerant. Perfect choice for frontline ocean sites.
Tetrazygia, West Indian lilac* <i>Tetrazygia bicolor</i>	6-12	Full sun to light shade	Low	Ornamental flowering shrub or small tree having lanceolate dark green leaves with three prominently depressed longitudinal veins. Showy terminal panicles of white/yellow flowers followed by purple-black berries. Highly attractive to birds. Calcareous soils with some organic content, preferably moist but can survive all but prolonged drought. Hand prune to keep within bounds.
Florida trema <i>Trema micranthum</i>	5-30	Full sun to light shade	Low	As a medium-sized tree, it is erect and symmetrical at first, becoming more open and untidy as it matures. Leaves in two ranks along stems, dull green, upper surface somewhat scabrous. Insignificant, axillary, flowers followed by tiny, yellow/orange berries. Sandy or calcareous soils having some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Spanish bayonet * <i>Yucca aloifolia</i>	5-20	Full sun or light shade	High	Slow-growing arborescent yucca with dangerously pungent, strap-like leaves. Trunks often topped with large, upright clusters of creamy white flowers. Suckers from the base to form clumps. Sandy soils preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant. Several cultivars available.
Bear grass, Adam's needle* <i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	3-6	Full sun	High	Stemless, stoloniferous yucca that forms a basal rosette of long, green, spear-like leaves edged with white threads. White, bell-shaped flowers in terminal spikes from mid- to late summer. Found on Florida east coast south to about Palm Beach Broward line – absent from Monroe and Collier counties.
Florida coontie * <i>Zamia floridana</i> Syns. <i>Z. pumila</i> ; <i>Z. integrifolia</i>	1-5	Full sun to light 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. Sandy or calcareous soil preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Biscayne prickly ash <i>Zanthoxylum coriaceum</i>	15- 20	Full sun	Moderate	Extremely rare component of coastal hammocks from Palm Beach south to Keys. Similar to <i>Z. fagara</i> below but smaller and having a neater appearance.

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

Wild lime <i>Zanthoxylum fagara</i> is in the same family (Rutaceae) as citrus and is a potential host for the insect vector (a psyllid) of huanglongbing (citrus greening), a devastating disease of citrus now present in Florida – as a consequence the availability of this tree may be limited.* <i>Zanthoxylum fagara</i>	20-25	Full sun	Moderate	Large shrub or open tree with recurved spines, lime-scented pinnate leaves with winged rachis. Insignificant yellow flowers attract butterflies. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
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Table 3. Native medium and large trees for south Florida, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. (Note: * indicates plants available in at least some south Florida nurseries.)

Common name Scientific name	Size (feet)	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Gumbo limbo * <i>Bursera simaruba</i>	20-50	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Semi-deciduous tree with somewhat pachycaulous (swollen) trunk and limbs; highly attractive, resinous, coppery, peeling bark (but feature highly variable). Large truncheons take easily but are weak-rooted, especially on bare limestone. Wood weak, limbs may break in strong winds without regular pruning. Sandy to calcareous soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Myrtle-of-the-River* <i>Calypttranthes zuzygium</i>	25	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. Limestone to calcareous sandy soil with some organic content. Limited drought tolerance.
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	Light shade to full sun	Moderate	Erect trunk flaring at base in large, mature trees. Upper leaf surface lustrous dark green; underside covered with soft, coppery brown hairs. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic content. An application of organic fertilizer beneficial. Limited drought tolerance; prefers evenly moist soils. Very attractive but can be difficult/slow to establish, especially on bare limestone or open sites. Prone to form basal/root suckers.
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.
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.

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

American persimmon <i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	50	Full sun	None	Dioecious, deciduous tree with single, well-developed if crooked leader and black, textured bark. Leaves two ranked and petiolate. Fruit (female trees only) is edible but can be messy. Susceptible to leafspots and tends to root sucker. Calcareous to sandy soils with some organic matter. Limited drought tolerance, prefers evenly moist to wet soils – growth slow on dry sites. Difficult to transplant; use container-grown trees. 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 to large, fast-growing shade tree; unlike many other <i>Ficus</i> spp. aerial roots are rare. Needs adequate room for vigorous root system to develop. Calcareous soils with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant. Occasionally develops as a strangler fig.
Longleaf blolly* <i>Guapira discolor</i>	25-30	Full sun to light shade	High	Small to medium tree or large shrub having a reddish brown to grey trunk and pale green, bluntly rounded, leathery leaves with a yellowish translucent mid-vein.. Insignificant flowers; female flowering trees bear small, red berries. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic matter. Short term drought tolerance; prefers evenly moist soil.
Dahoon Holly* <i>Ilex cassine</i>	15-30	Full sun to part shade	Moderate	Small, upright tree or large shrub with glossy dark green oblong leaves. Attractive red berries in winter on female flowering trees. Moist, organically rich to somewhat sandy acidic soils. Limited drought tolerance; provide supplemental water to maintain soil moisture. On limestone-based soils, especially if dry, develops bare thin canopy.
Krug holly * <i>Ilex krugiana</i>	30	Partial shade	High	Tropical holly that forms a small to medium upright tree with an open canopy; glabrous leaves (with tiny black stipules) that rapidly turn black on falling. On female trees, small, red berries, black when fully ripe. Calcareous soils, preferably with some organic content. Highly tolerant of drought.
Black ironwood * <i>Krugiodendron ferreum</i>	30	Full sun to light shade	Low	Very slow growing, forming a tight neat crown; attractive furrowed bark; heartwood extremely dense; leaves coriaceous, shiny with wavy margins and blunt-notched apices. Flowers insignificant; fruit a sweet, edible black drupe. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant.
Wild tamarind * <i>Lysiloma latisiliquum</i>	40-60	Full Sun	Moderate	A spreading, fine-textured tree with attractive, feathery, bipinnately compound leaves. Structurally weak requiring regular pruning to improve storm resistance. Calcareous soils, preferably with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant. Attracts butterflies.

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

Red mulberry <i>Morus rubra</i>	40	Full sun	Low	Deciduous, fast-growing tree with spreading open crown. Cordate leaves with serrated margins. Fruit raspberry-like (syncarp) of variable quality – can be messy but attracts birds and other wildlife. Leaves susceptible to leafspots and chewing damage. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic matter. Some limited drought tolerance, prefers moist soils.
Jamaican dogwood* <i>Piscidia piscipula</i>	30-50	Full sun	High	Fast-growing, briefly deciduous tree with thin grey bark, irregular branches and odd pinnate leaves (leaflets grey green). In spring covered with masses of lavender/white flowers prior to leaf renewal. Poisonous. Calcareous soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant. Storm resistant.
West Indian cherry <i>Prunus myrtifolia</i>	20-30	Full sun to light shade	Low	Accent or specimen tree having an erect slender trunk with rough grey bark; leaves wavy margined, shiny, dark green with a characteristic odor of bitter almonds when crushed. Masses of small white flowers in winter. Fruit is food source for many birds and small animals. Leaves and seeds poisonous to domestic animals and humans. Calcareous soils with some organic content. Survives short periods of drought but prefers evenly moist soil.
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. Very sensitive to being planted too deeply. Slightly acid sandy soils with some organic content. Limited drought tolerance - requires moist to wet soils. Poorly adapted to metro Miami -Dade. Faster growing but weaker than live oak (see below).
Live oak * <i>Quercus virginiana</i>	40-50	Full sun	High	Slowly develops an impressive, wide spreading crown; leaves glossy, margins often serrated or lobed in very young trees. Major leaf drop in spring rapidly followed by leaf renewal. Sandy or calcareous soils preferably with some organic content. Drought tolerant but prefers evenly moist soils. Not for small lots. Canker and root/trunk rots sometimes a problem. With pruning to ensure structural integrity, storm resistance is good.
Soapberry <i>Sapindus saponaria</i>	20-45	Full sun	High	Broad, dense crown; pinnate leaves with winged rachis and typically even number of narrow pointed leaflets. Fruit a yellow, leathery drupe with poisonous seeds. Calcareous or sandy soils preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant. Excellent shade tree for small yards.
Mastic * <i>Sideroxylon foetidissimum</i> Syn. <i>Mastichodendron foetidissimum</i>	50-75	Full sun	Moderate	Dominant tree; trunk base flared, grayish brown bark breaking off in large, thick squares. Leaves long petioled, margins distinctly wavy. In summer, bright yellow flowers (fragrant, especially at night); edible berries in late winter. Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic content. Highly tolerant of drought. Excellent resistance to storms.
Willow bastic * <i>Sideroxylon salicifolium</i>	10-30	Full sun to partial shade	Low	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 available in at least some south Florida nurseries.)

Paradise tree * <i>Simarouba glauca</i>	30-50	Full sun	Low	Large, elegant tree; trunk erect with bark finely fissured. Long pinnate leaves having 10-14 stiff, rounded glossy leaflets (flushed orangey red on new growth). Dioecious, female trees produce an abundance of small fruit (can be messy). Calcareous or sandy soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant; requires excellent drainage. Good resistance to wind.
Mahogany * <i>Swietenia mahagoni</i>	40-75	Full sun	Moderate	Attractive, semi-deciduous south Florida shade tree with a broad rounded crown. Leaves evenly pinnate, with 2-4 pairs of shiny asymmetric leaflets. Fruit a large woody capsule. Calcareous soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant. Structural defects often compromise storm resistance. Over used in the past -noted as invasive of natural area pine rocklands. Tip borers and weevils can be pests.
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 south Florida nurseries. Note also that all of these palms are resistant to lethal yellowing disease.)

Common name <i>Scientific name</i>	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. Sandy or calcareous soils with or without organic content. Drought tolerant once sufficiently established.
Buccaneer palm, Sargentcherry palm * <i>Pseudophoenix sargentii</i>	10	Full sun	High	Slow-growing feather leaf palm. Gray trunk and prominent gray-green crownshaft, topped by sparse crown of silvery-blue-green leaves. Produces grape-sized, red fruit. Sandy or calcareous soils. Drought tolerant once established.
Scrub palmetto* <i>Sabal etonia Sabal minor</i> (dwarf blue palmetto) is native to north and central Florida – similar to <i>S. etonia</i> but smaller and with bluish-green leaves.	3-5	Full sun	Moderate	Small, trunkless, solitary, shrub-like fan palm more prevalent in central Florida. Bears large clusters of small, purplish black fruit. Sandy soils with or without organic matter. Highly drought tolerant.
Cabbage palm * <i>Sabal palmetto</i>	25-50	Full sun to partial shade	High	Tall palm with rounded crown of fan-shaped leaves and smooth or rough trunk. Highly adaptable. Florida's state "tree." Calcareous or sandy soils, usually with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant but slow to establish. 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.

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 south Florida nurseries. Note also that all of these palms are resistant to lethal yellowing disease.)

Keys thatch palm * <i>Thrinax morrissii</i>	15	Full sun to partial sun	High	Fan-shaped leaves are bluish-green above and silvery below. Small white fruit produced in the fall. Calcareous soils. Tolerant of all but prolonged drought.
Florida thatch palm * <i>Thrinax radiata</i>	25	Full sun to partial sun	High	Grows naturally in sand or on limestone. Similar to <i>T. morrissii</i> ; differs in that leaves are green on both sides. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic matter. Slightly less tolerant of drought than <i>T. morrissii</i> .
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 available in at least some south Florida nurseries.)

Common name Scientific name	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
Beach bean <i>Canavalia rosea</i>	6-12 inches	Full sun	High	Sprawling, usually prostrate vine; leaves trifoliolate with rounded leaflets. Attractive purple flowers. Sandy soil, highly drought tolerant. Classed as a vine but used more as an excellent beachfront groundcover. Can grow into surrounding shrubs or over fences if not controlled.
Pineland snowberry <i>Chiococca parviflora</i>	1–10'	Full sun to light shade	Low	See entry in Table 2.
Quail berry, ground holly * <i>Crossopetalum ilicifolium</i>	12 inches	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Very attractive prostrate, evergreen, shrubby groundcover with small, holly-like, spiny leaves and attractive red berries. Calcareous soils with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant. Especially suited to pine rockland.
Penny grass <i>Dichondra carolinensis</i>	2 inches	Full sun	High	Low-growing groundcover with kidney shaped leaves. Viewed as a weed in turf grass. Can be used for edging or mass plantings. Prefers moist soil.
Elliott's Love grass* <i>Eragrostis elliottii</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. Sandy soils with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant but can also withstand brief flooding.
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. Free-draining, sandy soils. Highly drought tolerant, intolerant of wet shady sites.
Golden creeper* <i>Ernodea littoralis</i>		Full sun	High	Low-growing, semi-woody shrub with square, reddish brown stems; leaves shiny, coriaceous, clustered toward leaf tips. Flowers: tubular white to pink with reflexed petals. Calcareous to sandy soils. Highly tolerant of drought. Excellent ground cover for coastal sites – inland requires perfect drainage.

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

Beach morning glory <i>Ipomoea imperati</i> Syn. <i>I. stolonifera</i>	6 inches	Full sun	High	Prostrate perennial, stems to 5- 10" rooting at nodes Blooms from spring through fall; white, funnel-shaped flowers with yellow throats, open in the morning, closed during afternoon. Ideal for beachfront sites. A less vigorous relative of the railroad vine, <i>I. pes-caprae</i> subsp. <i>brasiliensis</i> (see below)
Railroad vine* <i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i> subsp. <i>brasiliensis</i>	3-8 inches	Full sun	High	Prostrate trailing perennial, stems to 100' rooting at nodes. Smooth, fleshy, rounded leaves; large, rosy pink, funnel-shaped flowers. Sandy soils; highly drought tolerant. Excellent for beachfront properties; important role in stabilizing sand dunes.
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 small pink powderpuffs. Sandy soils. Highly drought tolerant. Of questionable nativity in south Florida. Can become weedy.
Muhly grass * <i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</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. Sandy to calcareous soils, preferably evenly moist but will survive limited drought.
Giant sword fern* <i>Nephrolepis biserrata</i>	3-4 feet	Partial to full shade	Low	Tall fern with elegant leaves. Makes an excellent groundcover for shady areas. Sandy or calcareous soils, preferably with some organic matter. Requires evenly moist soils. Drought tolerance very limited, improved somewhat where there is more shade.
Baby rubber plant * <i>Peperomia obtusifolia</i>	12-18 inches	Partial to full shade	Low	Stoloniferous herb sometimes epiphytic; leaves rounded and fleshy; spikes of insignificant flowers.. Neutral to somewhat acid, organic-based soils. Requires evenly moist soil; drought tolerance very limited. Numerous cultivars available: leaves variegated cream to yellow and shades of green.
Silkgrass * <i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>	2-3 feet	Full sun	Low	See description in Table 1 above.
Long-stalked stopper <i>Psidium longipes</i>	1.5-3 feet	Full sun to light shade	Low	See description in Table 2 above.
Pineland brake <i>Pteris bahamensis</i>	1-2 feet	Full sun to light shade	Low	Forms tidy clumps; as old brown leaves accumulate, entire plant can be severely cut back in early spring to stimulate fresh growth. Calcareous soils with little organic matter. Highly drought tolerant. Especially suited to pine rockland. Populations in the wild at risk from hybrids formed with exotic Chinese brake fern, <i>P. vittata</i> .
Inkberry <i>Scaevola plumieri</i>	2-4 feet	Full sun	High	See description in Table 2.
Sea purslane* <i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	6-8 inches	Full sun	High	Sprawling, succulent groundcover; red-flushed stems bear narrow, fleshy leaves and tiny purplish-pink flowers. Good for beachfront properties. Brackish, sandy soils with little or no organic content. Tolerates prolonged drought.

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

Lopsided Indian grass <i>Sorghastrum secundum</i>	24-48 inches	Full sun to light shade	Low	Clump-forming grass with fairly non-descript leaves in spring and summer. In late summer or early fall, however, striking, 4- to 6-foot, one sided, tan flower panicles emerge. Sandy or calcareous soils. Highly drought tolerant. Wait until flowering is over before cutting back.
Sand cordgrass * <i>Spartina bakeri</i>	4-6 feet	Full sun	High	Large, bunch-forming grass with wiry, brownish-green, scabrous leaves. Sandy or calcareous soils. Some limited drought tolerance but requires evenly moist soil to thrive. Underutilized; suitable for seaside locations away from direct ocean exposure.
Pineland dropseed* <i>Sporobolus junceus</i>	1-3 feet	Full sun	Moderate	One of Florida's most attractive ornamental grasses. Forms large, hemispherical clumps of thin, wiry, blue-green to silvery green leaves. Flower spikes are tall and bear numerous, tiny, reddish-colored flowers. Calcareous or sandy soils. Highly drought tolerant.
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 clumping grass with broad green blades having prominent, often whitish midribs. Forms fountain-like clumps. Distinctive flowers rise above leaves on slender stems in midsummer. Calcareous or sandy soils. Some drought tolerance; requires needs evenly moist soils to thrive. Easy to grow and excellent substitute for non-native pampas grass.
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 at least some south Florida nurseries.)

Common name <i>Scientific name</i>	Size	Light preference	Salt tolerance	Comments
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 – light shade	Low	Easily cultivated vine that can grow prostrate as an open ground cover or a twining climber. Leaves trifoliolate: leaflets linear and delicate or broader, more lanceolate. Flowers are purplish-pink, pea-like in appearance. Calcareous or sandy soil. Highly drought tolerant.

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

Coin vine <i>Dalbergia ecastaphyllum</i> <i>Dalbergia brownei</i> is similar, but has trifoliolate leaves and spines on older stems – it is restricted to the Keys and Miami-Dade.	25'	Full sun to light shade	High	Large, scandent, sprawling shrub with brittle stems and elliptic to orbicular unifoliolate leaves with pointed tips. Clusters of small white flowers in leaf axils followed by coppery, flat, round, one-seeded pods. Moist, sandy soils preferred but good drought tolerance. Often uses neighboring trees for support but can be trellised. Prostrate stems readily root.
Rubber vine, devil potato <i>Echites umbellata</i>	10-30 feet	Full sun	Low	Evergreen, twining vine with dark green, glossy leaves and semi-showy, tubular white flowers having twisted propeller-like petals. All parts of this plant are toxic. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic content. Highly drought tolerant.
Sky blue cluster vine* <i>Jacquemontia pentanthos</i>	10-20 feet	Full sun	High	Fast-growing twining, to sprawling vine; blue to violet funnel-shaped flowers in clusters late summer, into fall. Leaves ovate to cordate with pointed tips. In Florida, native populations scattered in Monroe and Miami-Dade. Limestone-based soils, preferably with some organic content. Limited drought tolerance. In garden setting, volunteers may be a nuisance.
Morinda, redgal <i>Morinda royoc</i>	5-10 feet	Full sun to partial shade	High	See description in Table 2 above.
Purple Passion flower * <i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	5-10 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Climbs by means of axillary stem tendrils. Leaves deep green, tri-lobed with cordate bases. Large, showy, fringed, white/lavender flowers followed by medium-sized, purple fruit. Sandy or calcareous soils with some organic content. Highly tolerant of drought. Larval food plant for several butterflies.
Corky-stemmed passion flower * <i>Passiflora suberosa</i>	20 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Low	Slender stems, becoming winged and corky, leaves vary from entire to deeply tri-lobed. Flowers small, greenish yellow not showy, followed by small, purple fruit. An excellent larval food plant for tropical longwing butterflies.
Wild allamanda * <i>Pentalinon luteum</i> Syn. <i>Urechites lutea</i>	15 feet	Full sun to partial shade	Moderate	Scandent shrub, new stems loosely twining. Leaves shiny, undersides tomentose, margins revolute. Blooms year-round with terminal clusters of showy, bright yellow, funnelform flowers. Calcareous or sandy soils, preferably with some organic matter. Highly drought tolerant but thrives more in evenly moist soil. Unlike non-native <i>Allamanda cathartica</i> (yellow allamanda), does not develop micronutrient deficiencies on Miami limestone. Misleadingly offered as yellow mandevilla.