



RESIDENTIAL PLANTING REFERENCE

Hello! Your landlord has opted into the Pigeon Pea Project, an endeavor of Blue Kitchen, Inc., a Florida non-profit. Edible plants make up a portion of what is growing in your home's yard. This is intended to provide not only a great source of fresh food, but an invitation to participate in the joy of growing food and Florida friendly pollinator plants as a rental tenant. The benefits of growing gardens and food are many — from improved mental health, physical health, neurological health and financial health to lowered grocery bills and new interest in healthier cooking. Working together we can create win-win situations for the soil, future generations, and your own wellbeing.

Growing techniques - We encourage methods that work WITH the environment, not forcing things to grow where they don't naturally thrive. These techniques including planting Florida native plants as well as permaculture techniques, as well as "easy to grow," things such as some tropical fruit trees or shrubs. "Food foresting," is a term that references this type of growing and can lead to a whole community of other growers. Layering cardboard, wood chips, compost to serve as a weed-barrier to build soil is common and encouraged and will be repeated over the months/years. These techniques will IMPROVE SOIL, making this a win-win for everyone involved. Tenants who wish to have raised beds, flower beds or other planned grow zones should seek advice from landlord.

Pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers - Please do not use on the yard beyond normal spraying for pests around the perimeter of the house as is expected and routine part of your lease. Acceptable products for weeds in the garden include vinegar, salt, Dawn dishwashing liquid and for garden pests, limited use of Neem oil, a commercial product. Layering plain/unpainted cardboard/wood mulch can reduce weed growth and is encouraged. Fertilizers can include kitchen scraps, leaf litter, grass clippings, coffee grounds and other such organic materials. Companion planting, such as marigolds around vegetables can help with some pests.

If you have any questions about a product, please reach out. Using poisons on the yard without permission may be considered a lease violation.

PREFERRED PLANT GUIDE

Pigeon Pea (*Cajunus cajan*)

Plant seeds 1/4-1/2 inch deep in Spring/Summer about 3-5 feet (or more) apart. Water until plant is established. Harvest in Fall/Winter when pea pods turn brown. Peas can be eaten fresh or allowed to dry on the vine (which makes for much easier separation of pea/hull.) They will grow approximately 6-8 feet tall for 3-5 years in much of Florida. In other areas, it will grow as an annual, meaning it must be replanted every year.



Juvenile pigeon pea plants

Storing: Fresh peas may be blanched/frozen; dried peas may be stored in a jar until ready to use.

Eating: Cook pigeon peas as you might a dried black bean or, if fresh, however you might cook a black-eyed pea. This can mean covering peas with two inches of water, seasoning with salt, garlic, peppers, and cooking until tender. Pressure cookers such as an Instant Pot, work well. Peas may also be eaten raw in salads and leaves are likewise edible in salads.

breaks down, it will add needed nitrogen to the soil, known as “nitrogen fixing.”

For more information:

<https://www.growables.org/informationVeg/documents/PeaPigeon.pdf>

Longevity Spinach (*Genera procumbens*)



Grows less than knee-high.

Plant cuttings directly into soil a few inches or in water for easy propagation. Will grow about 12 inches tall in partial shade. May grow as a ground cover.

Eating: Use as any other leafy green: raw, sautéed, in soups/stews/omelettes. This is a delicious alternative to “regular” spinach or even greens on a sandwich.

For more information:

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/osceolaco/2018/06/06/greens-that-beat-the-heat/>

Everglades tomatoes

Plant seeds or grow from cuttings from a plant. Often grows year-round in Florida and will sprawl along the ground, where new roots will form, creating more heartiness.

Storing: Blueberry-sized tomatoes may be stored in or out of the refrigerator while fresh; canned or frozen as stewed tomatoes or cooked into a sauce.



Blueberry-sized and delicious: Pick handfuls almost daily!

Eating: These are delicious, blueberry-sized tomatoes perfect for salads, pastas or making into sauce if there are enough of them.

Easily grown from cuttings, or dividing the root ball into fourths or from seeds, Sprawls up to about 3 feet and beautiful in pots. Makes a nice cutting for indoors as well.

For more information:

Cuban Oregano

Storing: Use fresh or dry leaves and store crushed, dried leaves in a jar.

Eating: Use as a spice in soups, curries, sauces, chutney or even in a beverage for a mild spice. Commonly used in black bean dishes, which also makes it perfect for using with pigeon peas!

For more information: <https://gardenningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/cuban-oregano/>

Sweet Potato (*Ipomoea batatas*)

Grows from cuttings of a plant placed in water until roots form (called “slips”) or by placing a tuber suspended into water with toothpicks to hold it. Grows in full or partial sun and may sprawl up to 10 feet!

Storing: Potatoes are ready for harvest when vines turn brown. May leave tubers in the ground for several weeks until ready to use them. After pulling, may be stored in a cool, dry ventilated place for a few months if stored properly. Its best to NOT WASH THEM until ready to use.

Eating: There are too many recipes to share here, but this is a holiday favorite for pies and side dishes but can also be used in curries, for fries, chips, roasted, or baked, for example.

For more information:

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/agriculture/sweet-potatoboniato/>

Other favored plants:

We will not attempt to list all the plants here, but we aim to support planting of vegetable gardens, raised beds and Florida friendly butterfly gardens, for example. We do NOT want plants with toxic qualities or potential for harm, such as thorns or common contact allergies, to be planted in the yard without specific permission.

We ask that you also refrain from planting any plant deemed “highly invasive” by Florida botanical authorities. If you don’t know, consult your landlord. The intention is to support tenants’ interest in gardening but also not contribute to further harm with invasive plants or those with questionable value.

To learn more:

Facebook:

Pigeon Pea Project
Transforming Florida Yards, FB Group

Books:

Transforming Florida Yards, by Amanda Pike
The Soil Will Save Us, by Kristin Olson

Websites:

University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service -
<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

You Tube:

Kevin Williams, the Orlando Gardener: <http://www.youtube.com/@orlandogardener>