

Plant This, Not That

A Native Plant Introduction

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Overview Of This Talk

- What are native plants?
- Reasons to use native plants over exotic plants
- Native options to common exotic landscape plants of South Florida
- Common landscape plants which you may not know are actually native
- Sources for native plants
- Native plant landscape inspiration

What are Native Plants?

- Plants which existed, evolved and thrived in a particular area prior to human settlement
- For the United States and Florida, that means prior to the discovery of America by Europeans
- Plants which have not been heavily bred, selected or hybridized

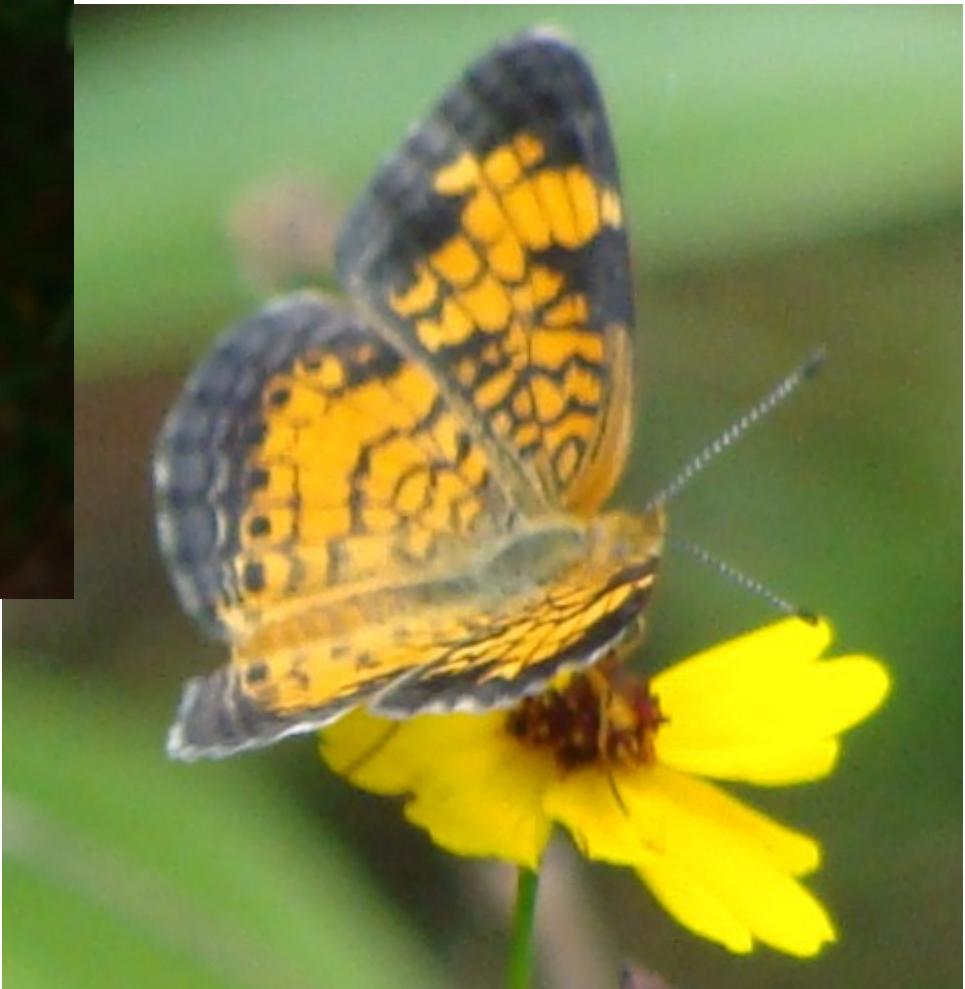
Why Native Plants?

- They support local wildlife
- They extend natural areas
- They are not invasive
- They are lower maintenance and use less water
- They promote what makes Florida unique
- They help you support the local economy and small businesses

Native Plants Support Local Wildlife

- Birds eat the fruits and seeds of native plants
- Birds eat the insects which live on native plants
- Butterflies need native plants for their larva
- Butterflies also prefer native plant flowers for their nectar
- Hummingbirds rely on native plants for their nectar as well
- Bees and other beneficial insects thrive in a native landscape

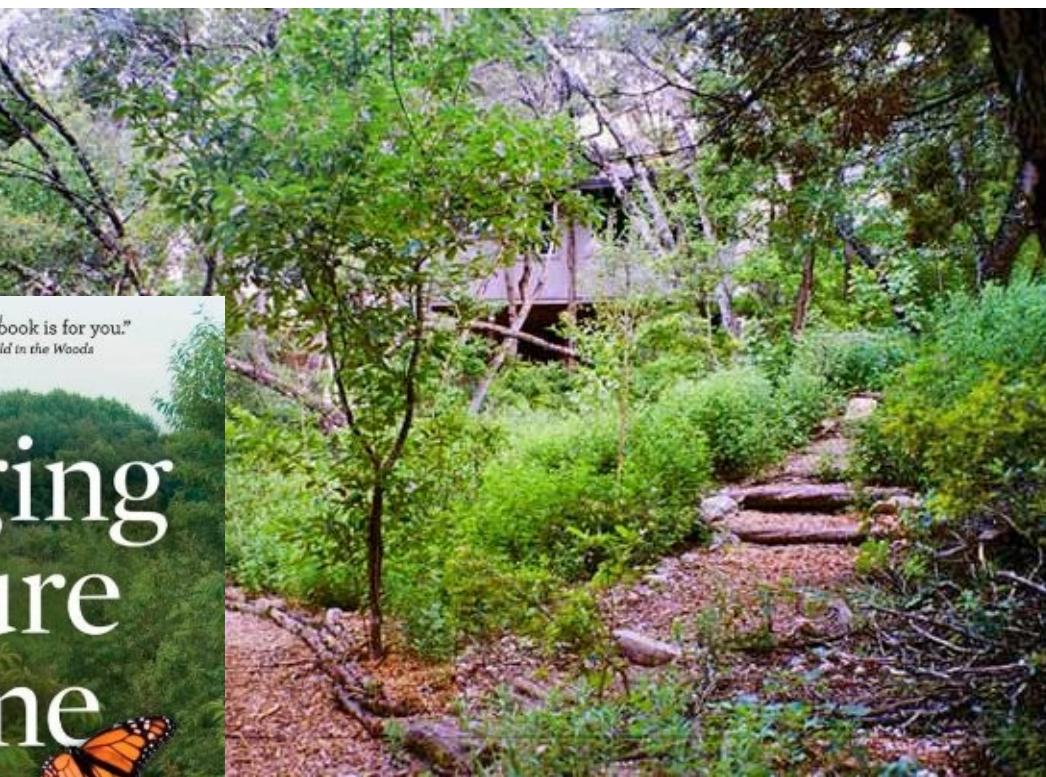
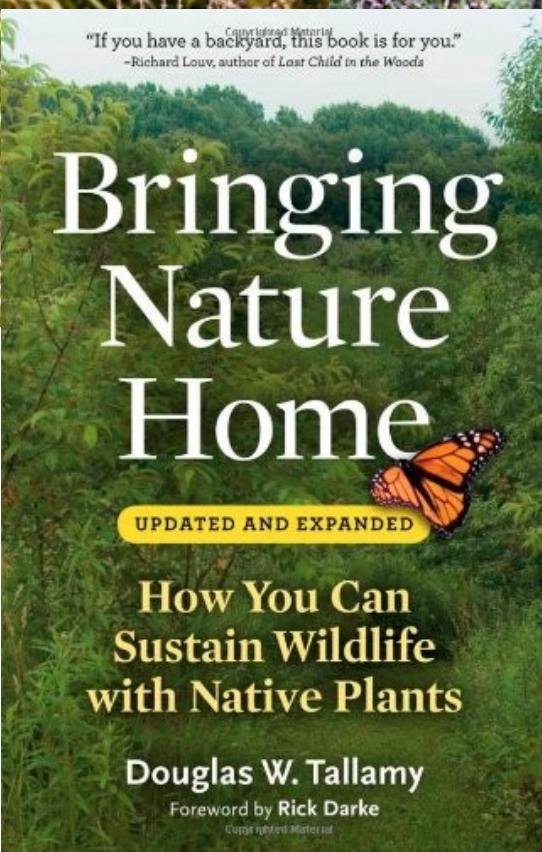
Native Plants Support Local Wildlife



Native Plants Extend Natural Areas

- Our natural areas are dwindling to nothing as human development takes over every available space
- The few natural areas that still exist become islands which isolate the animals that live within them
- Using native plants in your yard in a more natural landscape can help build corridors to connect larger natural areas
- “Bringing Nature Home” by Doug Tallamy

Native Plants Extend Natural Areas



Native Plants Are Not Invasive

- Native plants (and animals) evolved together to live in balance in particular regions
- Exotic plants (and animals) can become out of control when introduced to new regions
- These exotics then cause harm to native populations
- The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) currently lists 172 invasive plants (about 15% of all exotics)
- Melaleuca and Brazilian Pepper are examples

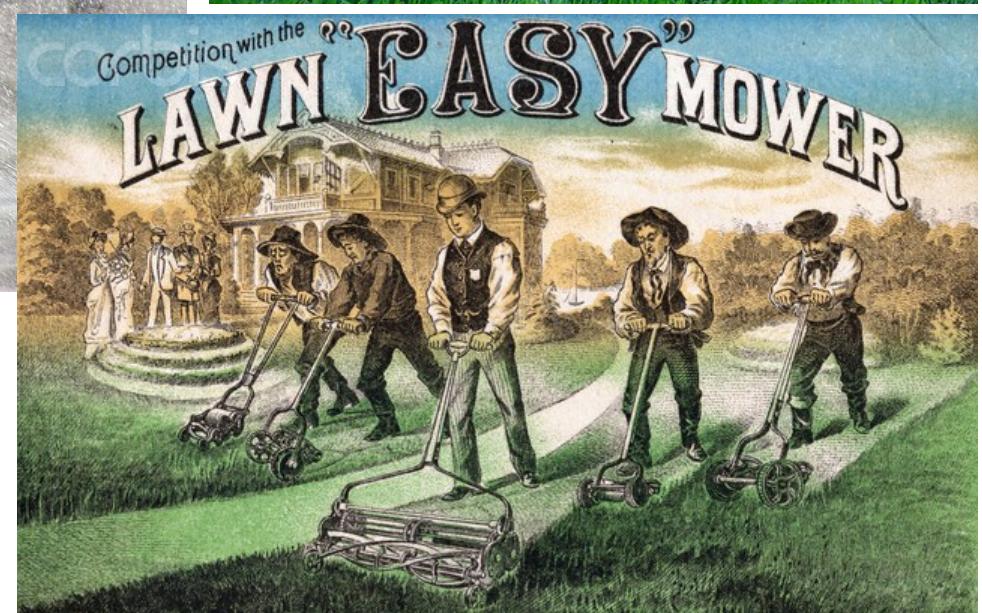
Native Plants Are Not Invasive



Native Plants Are Lower Maintenance

- They are more naturally resistant to native insects
- They are adapted to Florida's unique water cycle, with wet summers and dry winters
- Many are quite drought tolerant
- Native landscapes tend to have little lawn, which means less (or no) mowing
- I deeply dislike lawns
- Water is precious and should not be wasted

Native Plants Are Lower Maintenance



Native Plants Promote Florida's Uniqueness

- There is no reason to see a picture of a home's landscape and not know where it is located
- Florida (especially South Florida) has many unique and interesting plants which just won't grow in other parts of the US
- Having a native landscape shows pride in what makes Florida uniquely Florida

Native Plants Promote Florida's Uniqueness



Native Plants Support the Local Economy

- When you buy native plants, it only makes sense to buy them locally
- Local native nursery owners know the area and what plants grow best there under various conditions
- Many plants in the big box stores which are sold in South Florida are grown in Georgia or even farther away

Native Plants Support the Local Economy



Plant This, Not That

Plant Replacement Method

- Consider the exotic plant and evaluate its aesthetics, location (if planted) and its growing conditions
- Find a native with similar aesthetics and growing conditions
- Use the native plant
- Yeah it's pretty simple!

Plant This, Not That Format

- Native (*Latin name*)
- Non-native (*Latin name*)



Plant This, Not That

- Pineland Petunia (*Ruellia caroliniana*)
- Mexican Petunia (*Ruellia brittoniana*)



Pineland Petunia (*Ruellia caroliniana*)



- Likes full sun and sandy soils but also does well in shade and moisture (less blooming in shade)
- Long lived perennial that generally dies back in the winter and reemerges in the spring
- Grows to about 12-18 inches high with a nice round form
- Trumpet shaped flowers can vary from deep purple to white in color and are good wildlife nectar source
- Will seed new plants in the landscape over time due to the "exploding" seed capsules but not invasive like the exotic Mexican petunia that spreads through runners

Plant This, Not That

- Jamaican Porterweed
(*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*)
- Old World Porterweed
(*Stachytarpheta urticifolia*)



Jamaican Porterweed

(*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*)



- Dark green foliage with blue flowers on square green stems
- Can grow to 1 foot high and 6 feet wide
- Likes part shade to part sun
- Highly drought tolerant
- Attracts butterflies
- Flowers are edible, taste like mushrooms

Plant This, Not That

- Coontie (*Zamia pumila*)
- Cardboard Palm (*Zamia furfuracea*)



Coontie (*Zamia pumila*)



- Host plant for the rare Atala Butterfly
- Grows 1-3 feet high with stiff fronds about 3 feet long with 3-6 inch long dark green leaflets
- High drought tolerance, moderate salt tolerance
- Good for full sun to deep shade
- Needs well-drained soils
- Used by the Seminole Indians to make bread and stew (but before roots can be eaten the toxic compound cycasin has to be removed)
- Due to Toxicity, use caution when planting around pets (dogs, cats, and horses) and children

Plant This, Not That

- Firebush (*Hamelia patens*)
- Ixora (*Ixora coccinea*)



Firebush (*Hamelia patens*)



- Usually 5-8 foot shrub but can be kept at 3-4 feet or allowed to grow to 10 feet
- Native has red-orange tubular flowers and hairy leaves in groups of 3 (non-native: non-hairy, groups of 4 leaves, yellow-orange flowers)
- Flowers provide food for butterflies and hummingbirds and berries attract songbirds
- Good as screen or border or foundation planting
- Green leaves have reddish borders

Plant This, Not That

- Sleepy Hibiscus (*Hibiscus furcellatus*)



- Chinese Hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*)



Sleepy Hibiscus (*Hibiscus furcellatus*)



- Full sun to light shade
- Grows up to 4-6 feet high
- Likes moist soil but can tolerate dry sandy soils
- Large dark pink flowers
- Flowers frequently stay closed, hence the name “sleepy”

Plant This, Not That

- Blue Curls (*Trichostema dichotomum*)
- Blue Daze (*Evolvulus glomeratus*)



Blue Curls (*Trichostema dichotomum*)



- Member of the mint family and grows as an annual
- Produces a huge number of seeds so will come back-in numbers
- Can grow up to 2 feet tall at maturity
- Long flowering from early summer through the fall
- Small intense blue flowers with long curled stamens and styles

Plant This, Not That

- Southern Magnolia
(*Magnolia grandiflora*)
- Umbrella Tree (*Schefflera actinophylla*)



Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)



- Grows up to 60-80 feet high with up to 30-40 foot spread and can be excellent shade tree
- Can grow in full sun, partial sun, or partial shade
- High salt tolerance and moderate drought tolerance
- Large leathery oblong leaves with shiny green topsides with red-brown fuzzy undersides
- Large white fragrant flowers bloom in late spring and summer
- Bright red seeds used by wildlife in the fall and winter

Plant This, Not That

- Jamaican Caper (*Capparis cynophallophora*)
- Dwarf Umbrella Tree (*Schefflera arboricola*)



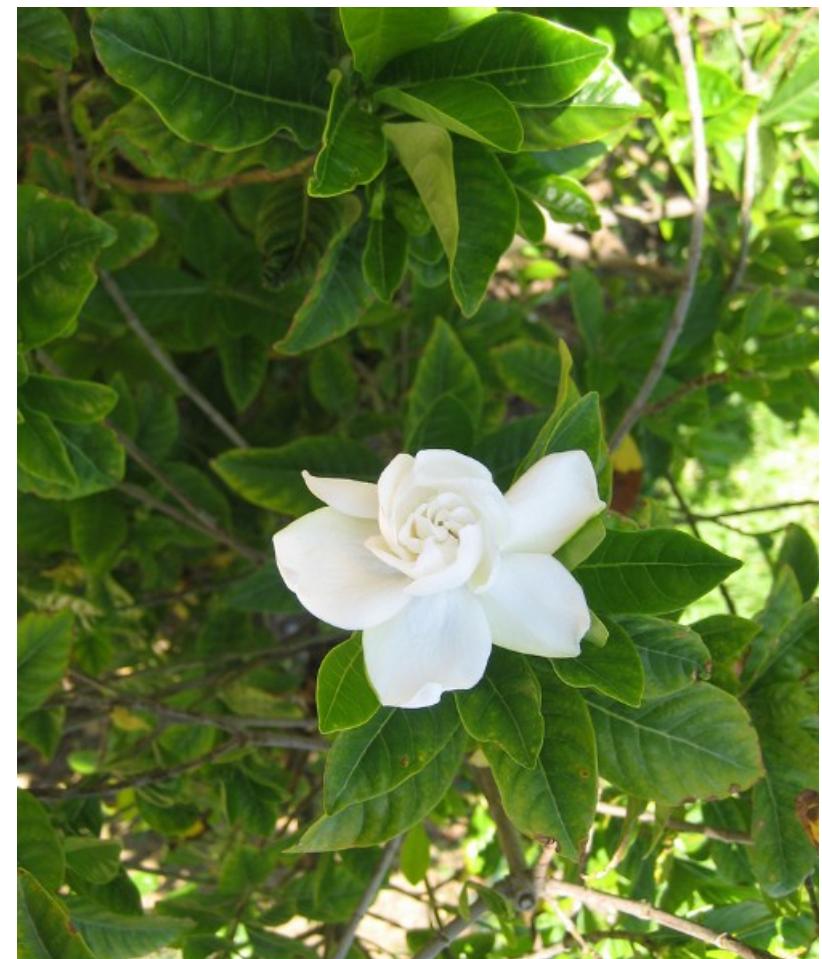
Jamaican Caper (*Capparis cynophallophora*)



- Larval host plant for the Florida white butterfly
- Large scrub or slender upright tree, 6-12 feet high
- Dark green shiny leaves with rusty undersides and showy brush like fragrant flowers that start out white and turn pink within a few hours
- Blooms in the evening- making it an alternative to night-blooming jasmine
- Likes full sun to light shade
- Drought tolerant once established but likes moist well-drained soils

Plant This, Not That

- Fiddlewood (*Citharexylum fruticosum*)
- Gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*)



Fiddlewood (*Citharexylum fruticosum*)



- Grows as a small tree or shrub, usually 6-8 feet high but as a tree can be 15-20 feet
- Salt and wind tolerant
- Thick leathery glossy green leaves
- Has small white fragrant flowers throughout the year and the nectar and fruits are good food sources for wildlife
- Can be in full sun or shade of hammocks

Plant This, Not That

- Red Stopper (*Eugenia rhombea*)
- Weeping Ficus (*Ficus benjamina*)



Red Stopper (*Eugenia rhombea*)



- Can be trained as a standard or large hedge, up to 15-20 feet high and 10-25 feet wide
- Good as a shade tree but not too overpowering
- Part sun to part shade
- Highly drought tolerant
- White year-round flowers
- Slow growing

Plant This, Not That

- Bahama Senna (*Senna mexicana* var. *chapmanii*)
- Thryallis (*Galphimia gracilis*)



Bahama Senna (*Senna mexicana* var. *chapmanii*)



- Small shrub 2-4 feet high
- Full sun to light shade
- Likes moist well drained soils and is moderately to highly drought tolerant
- Low salt tolerance
- Showy yellow flowers
- Larval host plant for the cloudless sulfur butterfly and others

Plant This, Not That

- Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*)
- Queen Palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*)



Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*)



- Usually up to 40-50 feet high
- Shiny green to black fruits are a favorite of wildlife
- Full sun, partial sun, or partial shade
- High salt and drought tolerance
- IFAS website reports it to be "as hurricane proof as a tree can be"
- Our state tree!

Plant This, Not That - Groundcovers

- Sunshine Mimosa
- Twinflower
- Fogfruit
- Basket Grass
- St Augustinegrass



© FNA

Plant This, Not That - Flowers

- Blanket Flower
- Beach Sunflower
- Scarlet Sage
- Greeneyes
- Many more... this is Florida!

- Annuals from the box stores



Oh That Is Native?

- Cocoplum
(*Chrysobalanus icaco*)



Oh That Is Native?

- Silver
Buttonwood
(*Conocarpus*
erecta)



Oh That Is Native?

- Fakahatchee Grass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*)



Oh That Is Native?

- Muhly Grass
(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)



Oh That Is Native?

- Yaupon Holly
'Schillings Dwarf'
(*Ilex vomitoria*)
- Debatable



Other Favorite Native Plants

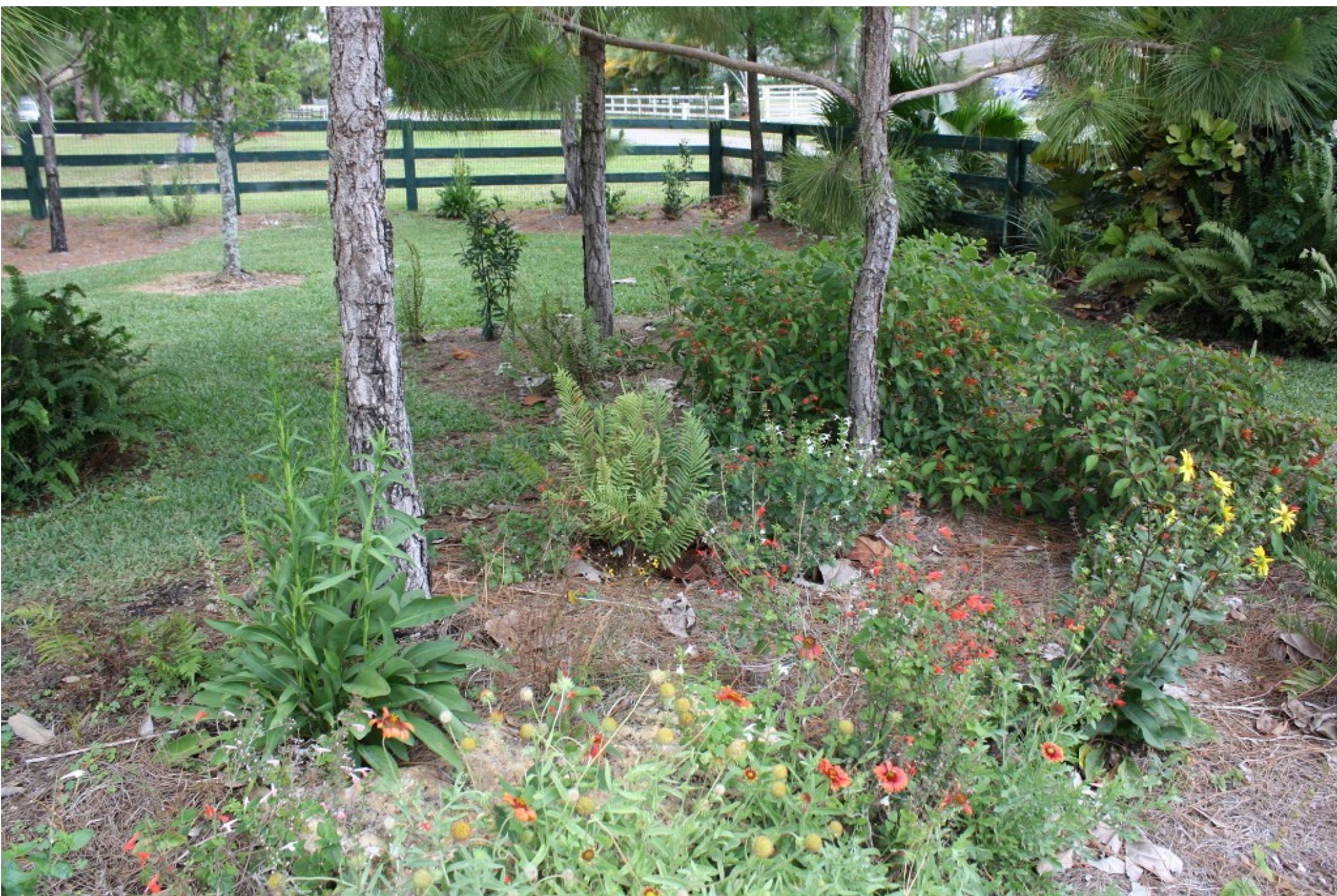
- Simpson's Stopper
- Marlberry
- Bahama Coffee
- Bahama Strongbark and Small Strongbark
- Locustberry
- Elliot's Love Grass and Purple Love Grass
- Rosinweed
- Quailberry

Sources For Native Plants

- Nurseries
 - Meadow Beauty Nursery
 - Native Choice Nursery
 - Indian Trails Native Nursery
 - Southern Native Nursery
- FNPS plant drawings every month
- FNPS demo garden maintenance (seedlings and cuttings)
- Mounts Guild Nursery
- Mounts plant sales (D.R. Bates)

Design Inspiration

- The FNPS demonstration garden at Mounts
- The butterfly garden at MacArthur Park
- Pine Jog
- Pan's Garden on Palm Beach Island
- Our FNPS chapter's yearly garden tour
- Our many parks, i.e. nature

























More Design Inspiration

- Standard garden designs from books and magazines, but with “Plant This, Not That” replacement of plants
- This replacement is frequently needed in Florida anyhow due to the usual “Northern focus” of many books and magazines
- Many of the same looks can be achieved with natives





Florida Native Plant Books

- A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants by Rufino Osorio (a member of our chapter)
- Native Florida Plants by Robert G. Haehle and Joan Brookwell
- Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife by Craig N. Huegel
- Natural Florida Landscaping by Walton and Laurel Schiller
- Sustainable Gardening for Florida by Ginny Stibolt
- The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape by Ginny Stibolt

Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS)

- My chapter is the Palm Beach Chapter
- Our meetings are the third Tuesday of the month at the building in the front of Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach (right by the airport on Military Trail)
- One Saturday a month we do garden maintenance of our native garden at the back of Mounts

Next Steps

- Learn – Books, Internet
- Socialize – Come to FNPS meetings, visit native nurseries
- Plan – Find a place in your yard to start, plan a small area
- Plant – Get some natives in the ground
- Establish – Baby those plants for a while
- Expand – Add on to your original area, with a goal to reduce lawn as much as possible
- Watch – As butterflies and birds come

Questions?

This Presentation

https://leavengood.github.io/files/plant_this_not_that.pdf

