

UF/IFAS MARION COUNTY
EXTENSION SERVICE

SMALL EDIBLES FOR SMALL SPACES



Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM



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EXTENSION SERVICE

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SMALL EDIBLES FOR SMALL SPACES

- What is an edible ornamental landscape?
- The FFL principles in practice
- Considerations for containers
- Herbs & Spices
- Vegetables & Greens
- Citrus
- Small Shrubs
- Edible Flowers



AN EDIBLE LANDSCAPE

Intermixes non-edible ornamental plants with edible plants that are attractive and suitable for the landscape

- May be native or non-native, as long as it is Florida-friendly
- Not invasive exotic
- Attracts wildlife
- Diverse, attractive, and low-maintenance
- Drought tolerant

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep475>

Landscape Design with Edibles¹

Gail Hansen²

A VISUALLY APPEALING EDIBLE landscape is created from the artful combination of edibles and traditional ornamentals in the garden. Although basic design principles apply, the substitution of edible plants for ornamental plants can present some challenges and opportunities. The principal challenge is maintaining a healthy-looking garden year-round with the short life span of most edibles. The key to making gardens last is to mix evergreen ornamentals, flowers, and traditional short-season edibles with long-season edibles and nontraditional edibles, such as berry shrubs, fruiting trees, and ground-covering herbs. The large varieties of new edibles on the market provide opportunities to select edible plants for

colorful containers and planters to provide interest and beauty when the plants are not taking center stage. There are twelve important ideas to consider when creating a successful edible ornamental garden.

Twelve Ideas to Create an Edible Landscape

1. Combine reliable, low-maintenance ornamentals with edible plants. Use evergreen ornamentals in the same way that they are used in a typical landscape—to maintain enough green structure in the landscape so cool-season bare areas are not noticeable. A colorful mix of landscape plants, trees, flowers, herbs, and vegetables

Edible Ornamental Landscaping Guide for North-Central Florida¹

Amanda Marek, Mark Bailey, and Gail Hansen²

Edible ornamental landscaping is the “artful combination of edibles and traditional ornamentals in the garden” (Hansen 2019). Well-designed edible ornamental landscapes, also called foodscapes, provide landowners with aesthetically pleasing, multipurpose gardens that provide food, color, and cover year-round. Not only can these landscapes provide a source of healthy, locally grown food in urbanized communities, they can also promote energy and water conservation, improve food security, and provide wildlife habitat (Çelik 2017). By converting conventional yards into sustainable, edible ornamental landscapes that utilize the principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, we may quell some of the health and environmental impacts of rising population growth and urbanization (Çelik 2017).

The purpose of this publication is to guide Floridians on how to design, install and maintain their edible ornamental landscape using reliable plants suitable for north-central Florida and the best management practices of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ with Edibles

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) program (<https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>) is a statewide initiative to promote attractive, low-maintenance landscapes that conserve water, protect water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. The nine

principles of FFL can be applied to any landscape, including edible ornamental landscapes, to reduce maintenance costs, irrigation, and the need for chemical pesticides and fertilizers (see *Edible Landscaping Using the Nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles* at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP594>).



Figure 1. A lovely loquat tree is center stage in this residential backyard with other ornamental plants.
Credits: A. Marek, UF/IFAS



1. This document is ENH1354, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date February 2022. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.

2. Amanda Marek, Florida-Friendly Landscaping Extension agent I, UF/IFAS Extension Marion County; Mark Bailey, sustainable agriculture Extension

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ IN PRACTICE

1. Right Plant, Right Place

- Test your soil pH
- Match plants to your light, soil & water conditions
- Know the mature size of the plants to allow space
- Select low-maintenance, hardy, non-invasive plants

2. Water Efficiently

- Microirrigation uses water efficiently to the roots; reduces disease pressure
- Reduce irrigation once established

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ IN PRACTICE

3. Fertilize Appropriately

- Healthy, fruiting and flowering plants may not need fertilizer
- Some edibles appreciate fertilizer before or during fruit-set
- Don't fertilize before a heavy rain
- Test your soil

4. Mulch

- Use organic mulch like pine bark or melaleuca
- 2-3" for best weed suppression away from trunk

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ IN PRACTICE

4. Attract Wildlife

- Plant pollinator and host plants to optimize fruit-set
- Have tolerance for some wildlife damage

5. Manage Pests Responsibly

- Identify the pest first
- Allow natural predators to do the work for you
- Use the least toxic control methods first
- Always read and follow the label
- Avoid landscape chemicals on edibles



CONTAINERS

- Plants in pots will need extra maintenance
 - Cover in freezes or plan to move indoors
 - Hand water or microirrigation
 - Change out soil every few years
- Do not overwater! Allow soil to dry out between waterings
- Avoid overcrowding or pots too small



Photos credit: ffl.ifas.ufl.edu

CONTAINERS

- Good drainage is essential
 - Multiple drainage holes
 - Add gravel, lava rocks to bottom of pot
- Avoid heavy, dense potting mixes
 - 1 part sand, 1 part peat moss, 1 part bark or perlite
- Use complete, slow-release fertilizers after new growth
- Excellent for annuals or smaller perennials
 - Trees and shrubs may outgrow container or have shorter life spans



Bay tree in container. A. Marek, UF/IFAS



FRUIT CROPS GOOD FOR CONTAINERS

Tropical Fruits	Citrus	Temperate Fruits
Avocado	Calamondin	Blackberry
Banana	Key Lime	Blueberry
Barbados Cherry	Kumquat	Fig
Guava	Lemon	Strawberry
Papaya	Limequat	
Passion Fruit	Tahiti Lime	
Pineapple		

Credit: J. Williamson & L. Jackson,
<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/mg243>

Container Gardening: Recommended Varieties and Spacing

Crop	Minimum Container Volume	Container Depth	Plant Spacing	Recommended Varieties
Beans, bush Beans, pole	2 gall/3 plants 5 gall/2 plants	8-10" 12-16"	6-8" 3-4"	Bush: <i>Snap:</i> Bush Blue Lake, Contender; <i>Shell:</i> Pinto, Red Kidney, Black Bean, Navy; <i>Lima:</i> Fordhook 242, Henderson, Jackson Wonder Pole: Kentucky Wonder, McCaslan, Blue Lake
Broccoli	5 gall/plant	12-18"	12"	Early Green, Calabrese, Waltham, De Cicco, Broccoli Raab
Carrots	5 gall/12 plants	12-18"	2-3"	Danvers, Nantes, Chantenay, Tiny Sweet
Collards	3-5 gall/plant	12-18"	12"	Georgia Southern, Vates, Top Bunch
Corn, sweet	15 gall/3-6 plants	12-16"	4-6"	Trinity, Silver Queen, Sweet Riser, Early Sunglow
Cucumbers	5 gall/plant	12-18"	12-16"	Space Master, MarketMore 76, Straight Eight, Boston Pickling
Eggplant	5 gall/plant	12-18"	18-24"	Black Beauty, Dusky, Long, Florida Market, Ping Tung, Rosita
Kale	3-5 gall/plant	12-18"	12"	Vates Dwarf Blue Curled, Tuscan, Winterbor, Lacinato (Dinosaur)
Lettuce	2 gall/plant	6-8"	4"	Tom Thumb, Ruby, Salad Bowl, Buttercrunch, New Red Fire (grow non-heading types)
Mustards	2 gall/plant	8-10"	2-6"	Florida Broadleaf, Tendergreen, Mizuna
Okra	3-5 gall/plant	12-18"	6-10"	Clemson Spineless, Emerald, Cajun Delight
Onions, bulbing Onions, bunching	2 gall/plant 1 gall/12 plants	12-18" 6-8"	4" 1-2"	Bulbing: Granex (yellow) Bunching: Evergreen, White Lisbon
Peppers	3 gall/plant	12-18"	12"	<i>Sweet:</i> Red Knight, Jimmy Nardello, Aji Dulce, Sweet Banana, Giant Marconi <i>Spicy:</i> Jalapeño, Thai, Hungarian, Habanero, Lon Cayenne
Potatoes	5 gall/3 plants	12-18"	8"	Red Pontiac, Yukon Gold, Gold Rush
Potatoes, sweet	5 gall/plant	18-24"	10-12"	Centennial, Beauregard, Vardaman
Radishes	2 gall/12 plants	6-8"	1-2"	Cherry Belle, White Icicle, Sparkler, Champion, Daikon
Spinach	2 gall/3 plants	4-6"	3-5"	Melody, Bloomsdale Longstanding, Tyee, Space
Squash	5-7 gall/plant	18-24"	24-36"	<i>Summer:</i> Early Prolific Straightneck, Summer Crookneck, Black Beauty Zucchini <i>Winter:</i> Spaghetti, Waltham, Table Queen & King, Butternut
Swiss Chard	1 gall/plant	10-12"	4"	Bright Lights, Fordhook Giant, Red Ruby
Tomatoes	5 gall/plant	18-24"	18-24"	Small: Sweet 100, Tiny Tim, Juliet, Sun Gold, Black Cherry, Small Fry Large: <i>Determinate:</i> Early Girl, Patio, Celebrity; <i>Indeterminate:</i> Better Boy, Beefmaster; <i>Heirloom:</i> Cherokee Purple, Mortgage Lifter, Brandywine
Turnips	1 gall/plant	12-18"	2-4"	Purple Top White Globe, Hakurei, Tokinashi
Watermelon	5-7 gall/plant	18-24"	24-36"	Small: Sugar Baby, Mickeylee; Large: Jubilee, Crimson Sweet, Charleston Grey 133





HERBS

HERBS & SPICES

- Many herbs do very well in North Central Florida
- May be self-seeding annuals or perennials: rosemary, thyme, oregano, chives, mint, etc.
- Herbs – leafy parts ; Spices – seeds, berries, bark, stems, roots
- Most require full sun and well-drained soil
- The flowers of many herbs are highly attractive to pollinators
 - Ex. Basil, rosemary, mint, cilantro
- Dill, parsley and fennel are host plants for black swallowtail butterflies



Cilantro in bloom. Seeds are called coriander.
A. Marek, UF/IFAS



HERBS & SPICES

- Basil
 - African Blue
 - Holy (or Tulsi)
 - Thai
 - Amazel™ Basil
 - Pest Besto™
- Borage
- Chives
 - Onion
 - Garlic
- Cilantro / Coriander
- Dill
- Fennel
- Ginger & turmeric
- Lavender – ‘Phenomenal’
- Lemon Balm
- Marjoram
- Mint
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Society Garlic
- Tarragon - Mexican
- Thyme

Borage. UF Ethnoecology

Onion chives. A. Marek, UF/IFAS



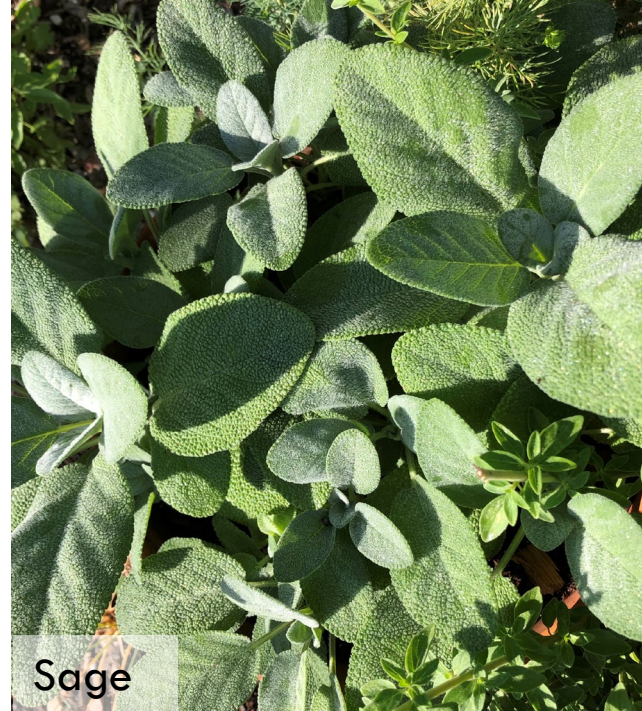
African Blue Basil in bloom. A. Marek, UF/IFAS



Dill



Thyme



Sage



Amazel™ Basil



Rosemary



Holy Basil



VEGETABLES & GREENS

VEGETABLES & GREENS

Some vegetables and greens that are particularly ornamental:

- Kale
 - Dinosaur aka Tuscan kale: cool-season crop; nutritious, dark, green-gray leaves
 - Ornamental kales: bitter tasting, best as garnishes. Ex. 'Pigeon Purple' and 'Glamour Red'
- Spinach
 - Okinawa: purple undersides, orange flowers, heat-tolerant, sun/partial shade
 - Malabar: heat-tolerant, attractive vine with succulent leaves, 'rubra' has red stems and more compact
 - Surinam aka Jewels of Opar: beautiful pink bloom, unique seeds, part shade



VEGETABLES & GREENS

- Swiss Chard – heat tolerant, full sun, very colorful stems and leaves
 - 'Bright Lights' – aka Rainbow Chard, multi-colored stems and leaves
 - 'Bright Yellow' – dark yellow stems
 - 'Fordhook Giant' – large, wavy green leaves, white stems
 - 'Ruby Red' – red stems and leaf veins
- Ornamental Pepper (*Capsicum annuum*)- warm-season crop, annual or perennial in 9B or south, multi-colored peppers, known to be extremely hot

VEGETABLES & GREENS

- Romanesco Broccoli – cool-season
- Mustard Greens – cool-season, full/partial sun
 - ‘Red Giant’ – large, purple foliage
- Cauliflower – cool-season only, full sun
 - ‘Violet Queen’ and ‘Graffiti’ - purple heads
 - ‘Cheddar’ - orange
 - ‘Flame Star Hybrid’ – yellowish orange

Romanesco Broccoli. UF/IFAS



Cauliflower in colors. Kiki Fontenot/LSU AgCenter

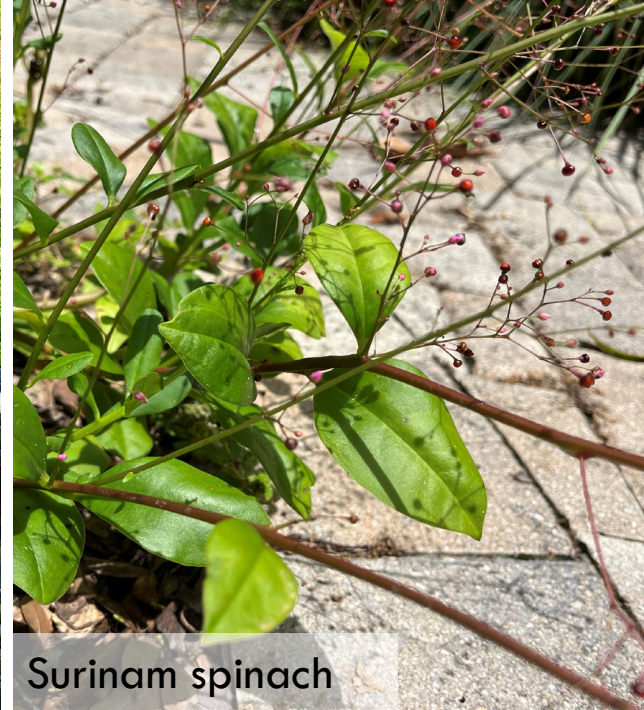




'Red Giant' Mustards



'Dinosaur' Kale



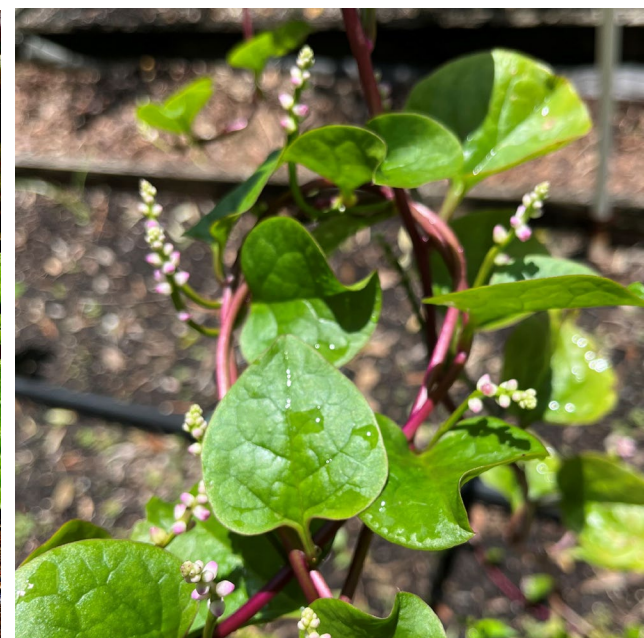
Surinam spinach



Ornamental pepper



Rainbow Chard



Malabar Spinach



CITRUS

CITRUS

- Citrus Greening is a fatal bacterial disease to all citrus spread by the Asian citrus psyllid
- To prevent infection, grow citrus under tents or in containers under lanais
 - Key Lime
 - Kumquat
 - Lemon ex. dwarf Meyer Lemon
 - Limequat
 - Tahiti Lime
- New citrus varieties showing promise:
 - Sugar Belle® mandarin hybrid
 - Finger limes



Finger lime. Credit: Cristina Carriz, UF/IFAS

SMALL SHRUBS

- Darrow's Blueberry (*Vaccinium darrowii*)
– evergreen, perennial, native blueberry; grows 2' tall and wide; new foliage is purple with small but tasty fruit; full sun, acidic soils
- Pineapple – a perennial bromeliad, cold-sensitive, may grow 3-6' tall and wide, grow well in containers, full-sun
- Rosemary – a perennial, evergreen, herb; flowers attractive to pollinators; can be pruned to size, grows up to 6' tall and 5' wide



SMALL SHRUBS

- Dwarf yaupon holly – an excellent, hardy, evergreen, perennial shrub; leaves used to make naturally caffeinated teas
 - ‘Bordeaux’ dwarf yaupon grows 2-3’ tall and 3 -5’ wide – no berries
 - ‘Nana’ grows 3-5’ tall and 3-6’ wide, occasional red berries
 - ‘Schillings’ or ‘Schellings’ grow 4-7’ tall and 6-10’ wide – no berries
- Roselle hibiscus – aka Cranberry hibiscus or sorrel; an annual flowering bush with attractive flowers and foliage; edible calyx; 5-7’ tall and wide, full sun



EDIBLE FLOWERS



EDIBLE FLOWERS

- Portulaca – aka purslane or moss rose; succulent annual ground cover, great for containers, full sun, beautiful flowers in many colors; edible leaves, stems and flowers in moderation
- Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*) – perennial in the mint family, red blooms late summer to early fall, highly attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds, flowers are edible and smell like pineapple
- Nasturtium – brightly colored orange, red and yellow flowers; edible leaves, pods and flowers, self-seeding annual, trailing and dwarf compact forms, full to partial sun



RESOURCES

- Container Gardens for Outdoor Spaces: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP326>
- Container Size Matters When Growing Veggies: <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/2020/01/27/container-size-matters-when-growing-veggies/>
- Growing Fruit Crops in Containers: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/mg243>
- Herbs & Spices in the Florida Garden: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/VH020>
- Citrus Culture in the Home Landscape: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS132>
- Peppers: <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/peppers.html>
- Pineapple Growing in Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/MG055>
- Vegetable Growing Guide: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/VH021>
- Dwarf Hollies: <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/dwarf-hollies.html>
- Florida Association of Native Nurseries: <https://www.fann.org/>
- Roselle: <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/roselle.html>
- Pineapple sage: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/salvia-elegans/>



Thank you for coming!

Any questions?

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