SMALL EDIBLES FOR SMALL SPACES
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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
Edible Ornamental Landscaping Guide for North-Central Florida

Amanda Marek, Mark Bailey, and Gail Hansen

Edible ornamental landscaping is the “artful combination of edibles and traditional ornamentals in the garden” (Hansen 2019). Well-designed edible ornamental landscapes, also called foodscape, 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 loquat tree is center stage in this residential backyard with other ornamental plants.
Credit: A. Marek, UF/IFAS

https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP618
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
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
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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tropical Fruits</th>
<th>Citrus</th>
<th>Temperate Fruits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>Calamondin</td>
<td>Blackberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Key Lime</td>
<td>Blueberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados Cherry</td>
<td>Kumquat</td>
<td>Fig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guava</td>
<td>Lemon</td>
<td>Strawberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papaya</td>
<td>Limequat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passion Fruit</td>
<td>Tahiti Lime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineapple</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Credit: J. Williamson & L. Jackson, [https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/mg243](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/mg243)
# Container Gardening: Recommended Varieties and Spacing

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

[https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/2020/01/27/container-size-matters-when-growing-veggies/](https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/2020/01/27/container-size-matters-when-growing-veggies/)
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
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
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 leave 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
'Red Giant' Mustards

'Dinosaur' Kale

Surinam spinach

Ornamental pepper

Rainbow Chard

Malabar Spinach
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
SMALL SHRUBS
**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

• 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://gardeningsolutions.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://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/shrubs/dwarf-hollies.html

• Florida Association of Native Nurseries: https://www.fann.org/

• Roselle: https://gardeningsolutions.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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