



UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County

st johns Law n &
GardEn gAZETtE



Fall Edition 2025



In This Edition:

What’s Growing.....2

Seminole Pumpkins.....3

Fall Gardening.....5

Green Drenching.....7

Bountiful Basil.....8

Kale in the Fall Garden.....12

UNF Botanical Gardens.....14

Olives in the Landscape.....16

Ask a Master Gardener.....18

Upcoming Programs.....19



ST. JOHNS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

Fall Plant Sale

FRIDAY-SATURDAY

**October
10-11**

9:00 am - 2:00pm


St. Johns County
Extension Office
3125 Agricultural Center Dr
St Augustine, FL 32092

Join us at the UF/IFAS St. Johns County Extension Office for our Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale! We will have landscape plants, houseplants, and vegetable seedlings available. We will also offer tours of the Demonstration Gardens on property.

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns/>

An Equal Opportunity Institution.





What's Growing?

For October–December Planting

Easily transplant: arugula, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, kohlrabi, and Swiss chard

Transplant with care: celery, mustard, and spinach

Use seeds: carrots, bunching onions, radish, and turnips

Seminole Pumpkin:

History, Harvest, & How to cook



Sarah Tomlinson

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer Coordinator

Seminole pumpkins are one of the most ethnobotanically significant crops in Florida history. The Seminole pumpkin was cultivated by the Creek, Calusa, and Miccosukee indigenous people of Florida in the 19th century. The Seminole people named a region in present day Citrus County “Chassahowitzka,” meaning “pumpkin hanging place.” Indigenous Americans would girdle trees in Chassahowitzka and plant Seminole pumpkin seeds near the tree to use the trunk as support for the vines. Allowing the pumpkin vines to climb gave the plant more structure and stability, and in turn increased the yield of pumpkins. Seminole pumpkins were an important crop to the indigenous people who grew them because it is one of the few crops that survive, and even thrive, in the heat of Florida summers. The pumpkins can also be stored for months before eating, so they fed the tribes all throughout the winter months when there were otherwise no fresh vegetables.



Seminole farmers



Seminole pumpkins

Seminole Pumpkin:

History, Harvest, & How to cook

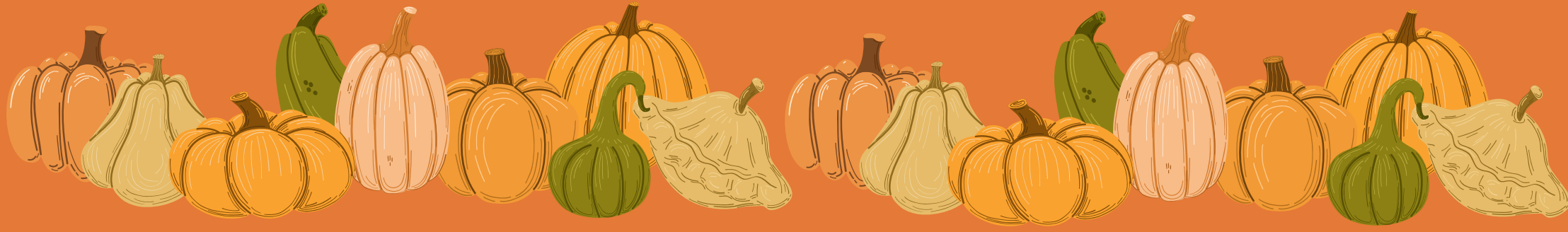
Sarah Tomlinson

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer Coordinator



Seminole pumpkins started March-July should be ready to harvest by September. They are ready to be harvested when the outer skin becomes tough, they turn a sandy orange color, and the stem starts to turn woody. The pumpkins can be twisted or cut from the vine and stored for up to 3 months in a cool, dark, well-ventilated space. They can also be cured by setting them in a sunny place for a week or two before storing. This increases the shelf life to up to a year.



Seminole pumpkins have a similar taste and texture to butternut squash but tend to be sweeter. They also have a less fibrous texture than traditional pumpkins. You can even eat them before they ripen; young green Seminole pumpkins can be cooked like zucchini or eaten raw. The leaves can be eaten raw in salads, the seeds can be roasted, and the flowers can be fried for a uniquely Florida treat.

For more information on Seminole pumpkins (or recipes!) email [**s.tomlinson1@ufl.edu**](mailto:s.tomlinson1@ufl.edu)

Fall Gardening



Connie Doyle

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer

Welcome, Fall!

The first day of fall - the autumnal equinox - arrived on Monday, September 22. With it comes a welcome drop in temperature. As plants slow their growth, we begin to enjoy not only the relief of cooler weather, but also the excitement of planting bright, colorful winter annuals.

Some favorites that thrive in cooler temperatures include: Alyssum, Baby's Breath, Calendula, Geranium, Pansy, Petunia, Snapdragon, Verbena and Viola.

If you are looking to add a tree that offers beautiful fall color, consider Bald Cypress, one of the earliest to show seasonal change. Other good options are: Florida Maple, Black Gum, Crepe Myrtles and Sweetgum.

Ever wonder why leaves change color? It's not just about chilly nights. The real trigger is the shortening of the days which means less sunlight. This shift reduces the amount of chlorophyll in the leaves, leading to chemical changes that reveal the brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows we associate with autumn. So, as the days grow shorter and cooler, take time to enjoy the natural beauty of the season - and maybe add a few new fall favorites to your garden.



Viola



Geranium



Alyssum

Fall Gardening



Connie Doyle

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer

OCTOBER TO-DO LIST

As lawns and gardens begin to slow their growth and prepare for dormancy, October is the perfect month to get ahead on maintenance. Here are a few tips to keep your lawn and garden healthy through fall and ready to thrive in spring:

Lawn Care:

Apply pre-emergence herbicides before winter weeds appear. Best applied when nighttime temperatures are 55–60°F for 4–5 days. Early October is the last time to fertilize the lawn. Use a fertilizer with little or no phosphorus (unless a soil test indicates otherwise). A controlled-release nitrogen fertilizer will give longer-lasting results. Avoid weed and feed fertilizer for best results.

General Garden Clean Up:

Remove old, dead, or diseased plants and branches. Clean up weeds. Enrich the soil with organic matter and mulch to retain moisture. Prepare for potential frost or freezes with row covers or frost blankets.

Plant Spotlight: American Beautyberry *Callicarpa americana* is a native Florida shrub that thrives in zones 7a to 10b. It does best in partial shade with well-drained soil that is acidic to slightly alkaline. Known for its striking purple berries, it adds beauty and wildlife interest to fall gardens.

Remember: There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments.

Keep on diggin', Connie



Green Drenching: 2025 Landscape Trends

Patty Plourde

UF/IFAS Extension

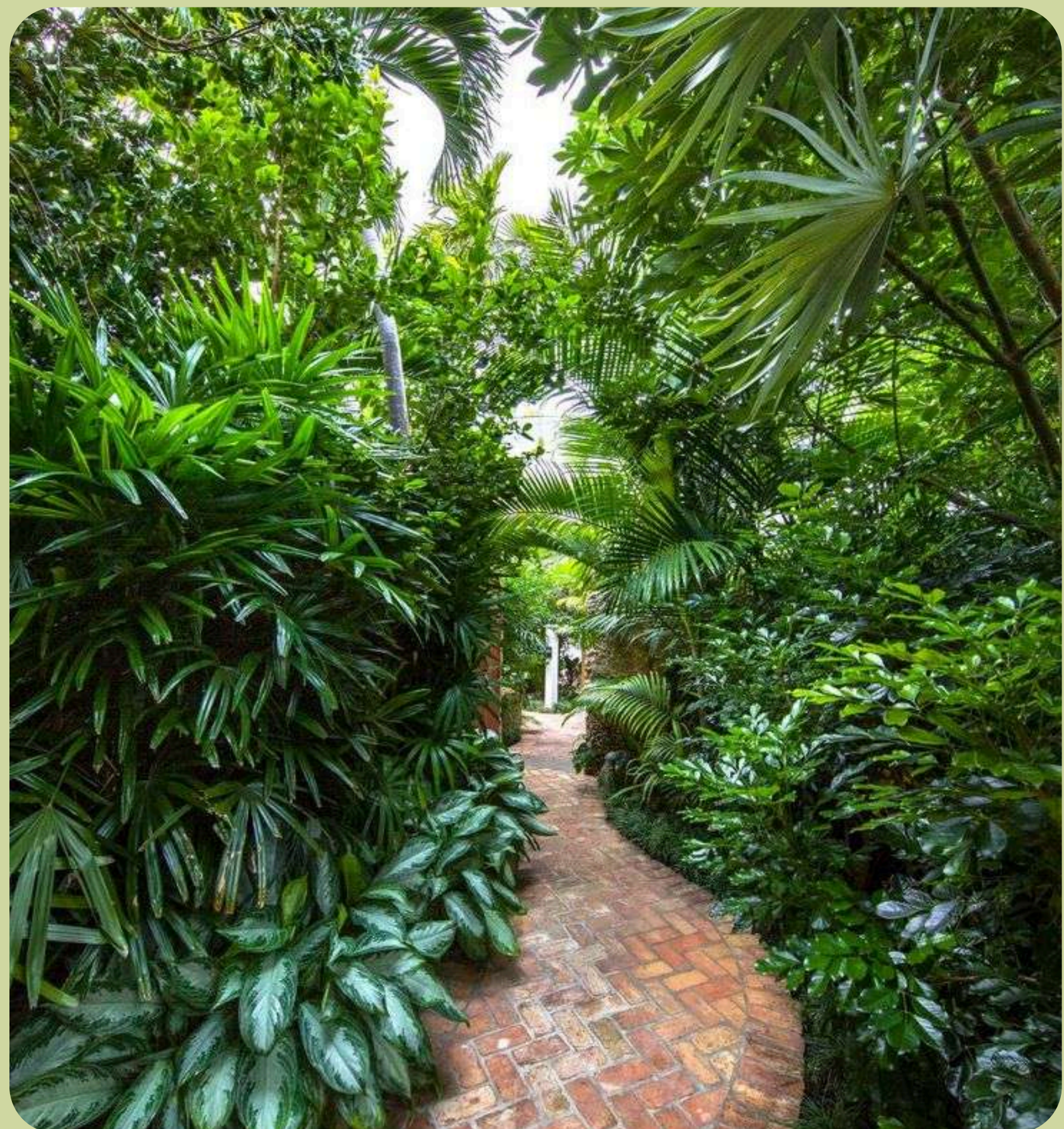
St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer

In today's fast-paced, high-tech world, finding peace of mind and breaking free from a world of auditory and visual clutter, which can lead to symptoms of anxiety and stress, can sometimes feel like a daunting task. However, there is a solution that has been shown to have a profound impact on ones' emotional and mental health. Colors can have a pronounced influence on our emotions, and green, the color of nature, has the ability to soothe, heal, and revive our mental and emotional wellbeing.

Think of walking through forests, meadows, or community parks, where the color green is in abundance. These landscapes provide us the opportunity to declutter our minds, reduce our stress, and release anxiety. Additionally, research has also shown that exposure to the color green improves our mood, increases creativity, and enhances cognitive functioning. Let's not forget the color green has also shown to improve sleeping habits. This concept of green drenching can be achieved by layering multiple shades and textures of green foliage. This type of lush greenery is not only stunning, and calming, but also low maintenance. All green plants naturally



complement each other and provide their own unique visual interest. Examples of rich green plants include; ferns, hostas, ornamental grasses, and shrubs such as boxwood. Layering these various green hues result is a dynamic, multi-dimensional garden that is visually engaging. You may be thinking that green drenching is a great idea for those drawn to a minimalist environment.

You may also feel you are more content with an array of color in your backyard garden. If the concept of green drenching seems foreign to you, a compromise of just adding a pop of color may be more satisfying and still provide a tranquil relaxing environment. Maybe it's time to give it a try even if it's just in a small portion of your garden.

Bountiful Basil



Jane Palmer

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer



Osmin Purple Basil and Sweet Basil

For more than 2,000 years, sweet, curvaceous basil leaves have been associated with images solemn, joyous, and frightful. This beautiful, varied plant has survived its checkered past to become the essence of the summer herb garden, gathering a large, devoted following that has made it a culinary icon. Tree tall or garden fairy short, with huge, puckered leaves or tiny smooth ones, basil is more than a simple herb.

There are 30-150 species (depending on who's counting), and numerous cultivated varieties. A few basils are perennial in their native tropical habitat, but most are annuals, plants that die after flowering and producing seeds or fruits.

Basil is native to Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and South America. It probably didn't arrive in Europe until a little more than 2,000 years ago. It is likely that early explorers and conquerors were drawn to basil not for its culinary uses, but for its ties to sacred rights and its alleged supernatural powers.

It wasn't long after basil came to Rome that it became part of a Christian legend. During the reign of Emperor Constantine (A.D. 306 - 337), the Emperor's mother, Helena, is said to have had a divine revelation that led her to a basil patch where she found what she presumed were the remains of the cross on which Christ was crucified. Italian traditions about basil also include the secular. Young women who pinned a basil leaf to their clothing were proclaiming their chastity. On the other hand, a pot of basil set on the windowsill signified that a woman was ready to entertain her lover.

The Greeks adopted basil, too. On St. Basil's Day, the first day of the new year, Greek women took basil to be blessed. Upon returning home, it is said the women strew some of the leaves upon the floor for good fortune and ate some of them with their families to ensure good health during the coming year. More practically, they placed the remaining leaves in chests to guard against mice and moths.

Bountiful Basil



Jane Palmer

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer

Some views of basil have been disapproving. John Gerard, a sixteenth-century writer and herbalist, quoted Galen, a second-century A.D. physician and writer on medicine and philosophy, who warned against the internal use of basil. Eating basil “dulleth the sight, breedeth wind, and provoketh urine.” Hilarious, a French physician, affirms upon his own knowledge “that an acquaintance of his, by common smelling of it, had a scorpion breed in his brain.”

Despite the wariness about basil, its roots took firm hold in Europe, especially in southern France and Italy as early as second century B.C. Sweet basil and bush basil made their debut in England between 1548 and 1572, not as a European import but from India. Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English colonists brought basil to the New World. It was found in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1621.

During the next 2 centuries, botanists sailing aboard ships exploring the world returned with new plants and seeds to add to basil collections. By the mid-twentieth century, the U.S. Department of Agriculture was growing a field of basil at its experimental farm in Arlington, Virginia. The crop did well. At the same time that production was just getting started in America, imports of basil skyrocketed as its popularity grew. Today basil varieties are readily available in garden centers and through seed catalogs. It is widely grown in culinary gardens for its aromatic leaves and flowers.

Basil is available in a wide variety of scents and flavors due to the types and quantities of essential oils contained in each variety. The many varieties of basil can be generally divided into four groups - sweet green, dwarf green, purple leaf, and scented leaf.

Some varieties, like ‘Greek Columnar’ or ‘Cardinal Basil’, can grow quite large - up to 3 feet tall. Larger basils do better planted in a flower bed or garden. Miniature basils, like ‘Dwarf Greek’ or ‘Spicy Globe’ are great for containers.



Osmin Purple Basil

Bountiful Basil



Jane Palmer
UF/IFAS Extension
St Johns County
Master Gardener
Volunteer



Cinnamon Basil

In general, the majority of medium sized basil varieties can be grown in the garden or in containers. Leaves can be either green or purple, flat or ruffled. Purple-leaf varieties like 'Purple Ruffles' or 'Dark Opal' can add a unique color to your dishes. Add some colorful leaves to salads and soups. Create a lovely and flavorful condiment by steeping purple basil leaves in white vinegar resulting in a crimson hue to the vinegar.

Sweet basil is commonly used in Italian cooking and is the most popular type in America. Sweet basil varieties like 'Genovese' and 'Lettuce Leaf' provide large, sweet green leaves that are great for using in pesto. Pesto's story goes back nearly 2,000 years ago to

Virgil, the last great Roman poet of the pre-Christian era, who many Italians consider the father of pesto. He is regarded as the first writer to mention pesto.

Beyond sweet varieties there are some unusual and interesting basil flavors to discover. Thai basil has a spicy flavor and is common in Asian cooking. 'Mexican Spice', also called cinnamon basil, has a subtle cinnamon taste and fragrance which is excellent in dishes using pumpkin, squash and sweet potato. Lemon and lime varieties have a mild citrus aroma. In Indonesia, lemon basil is often served fresh with vegetables, poultry or fish. Lime basil is great for marinades as well as desserts like sorbets and shortbread cookies. Holy basil, native to India, has an aroma of mint, camphor and licorice and is frequently used in tea - known as tulsi tea. As stated previously in this article, there are scores of varieties of basil to choose from. You can see what flavors you like and what works best for your garden.



Tulsi Basil

Bountiful Basil



Jane Palmer
UF/IFAS Extension
St Johns County
Master Gardener
Volunteer

Basil grows well in Florida's warm climate. Plant it from seed or purchased plants in early spring or again in September in containers or directly in the garden. It likes sun (with a bit of afternoon shade protection from hot summer sun) and well drained, rich soil. The plants are sensitive to cold so provide protection on cold nights. The leaves of many varieties will turn black and drop off when temperatures drop below 40 degrees.

Basil can be harvested as needed. Cut stems just above leaf nodes to encourage regular growth, branching and production of new leaves. Allowing the plant to flower and set seed will shorten its growing season. However, it is nice to let a few flowers grow - the bees love them, plus collecting some seeds is an option.

Basil can struggle with insects like aphids, spider mites, and whiteflies. Upon signs of infestation, an insecticidal soap is a low toxicity remedy. Basil is also susceptible to diseases like downy mildew and fusarium wilt. These diseases are hard to prevent because the spores are dispersed on the wind. Good habits like avoiding overhead watering and ensuring air circulation around your plants discourages fungal growth. If you notice signs of disease, promptly remove and dispose of the infected plants to prevent further spread.



Sweet Basil



Green Ruffles Basil

Kale in the Fall Garden



Shirley Barber

UF/IFAS Extension
St Johns County
Master Gardener
Volunteer

At last, cool weather is upon us, providing the best gardening season of the year. When looking to add color to our gardens during winter and spring, flowers are not the only solution. While flowers provide color, there are so many vegetable and herb plants that provide color and drama with their foliage during the cool season, for example, pak choi, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi, Swiss Chard, parsley, dill, and cilantro, just to name a few. Kale does it best! With so many variations, more than one will catch your eye and become your favorite. And best of all, Kale tolerates many growing conditions and light frost.

This gardener's love of Kale began in Texas, where cabbage loopers (caterpillars) are a serious problem eating pansies and other flowering plants. Kale 'Red Peacock' came to the rescue, as its beautiful frilly serrated leaves does not show the caterpillar damage as much as other plants. This kale can be a real beauty and looks so healthy, in spite of the caterpillar



snacking on the leaves. 'White Peacock' offers an additional color option. Mass plantings of 'Red Peacock Kale' is stunning and has garnered compliments in our gardens.

Edible kale plants are bred for a milder flavor to be enjoyed at the dinner table. Such is the case for Kale 'Prizm', designated as an All-America Selections (AAS) Winner in 2016. This kale produces attractive short, tight ruffled-edged leaves that grows well in the garden and in containers. This easy-to-maintain kale is quick to produce leaves for harvest today and regrows for harvest throughout the season. Another AAS Kale winner is the ornamental kale 'Glamour Red' announced AAS winner in 2011. This ornamental Kale stands out with its shiny fringed colorful leaves and flower head size of 10 inches.

Kale in the Fall Garden



Shirley Barber

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer



Lacinato Kale

Lacinato is another type of kale, also known as Dinosaur, Italian or Toscano kale. The variety 'Black Magic' is impressive with its 4-foot stature and dark blue-green long leaves. Some say it has the best flavor of all the kales. Another tall beautiful Kale is 'Redbor' with its bright purple stalks and ribs. It is often used as a garnish on restaurant dishes.

Kale is very easy to grow from seed, germinates in less than 10 days, and grows quickly to a mature plant. Seeds are easy to locate and purchase online from many sources.

Other varieties can be seen in the winter/spring gardens at St. Johns County Botanical Gardens including, Dwarf Scotch Blue, Red Russian, White Russian, Red Peacock and Yokohama Red and Yokohama White. Continue to search for new varieties of kale. Plant breeders are very busy producing new varieties every year.

Check out the gardens at St. Johns County Botanical Gardens this winter and spring for kale and so many other beautiful cool season vegetable, herbs and flowering plants.



Red Russian Kale



Dwarf Blue Scotch Kale

Hidden Paradise Awaits Plant Lovers at UNF Botanical Garden



Lana Bandy
UF/IFAS Extension
St Johns County
Master Gardener
Volunteer

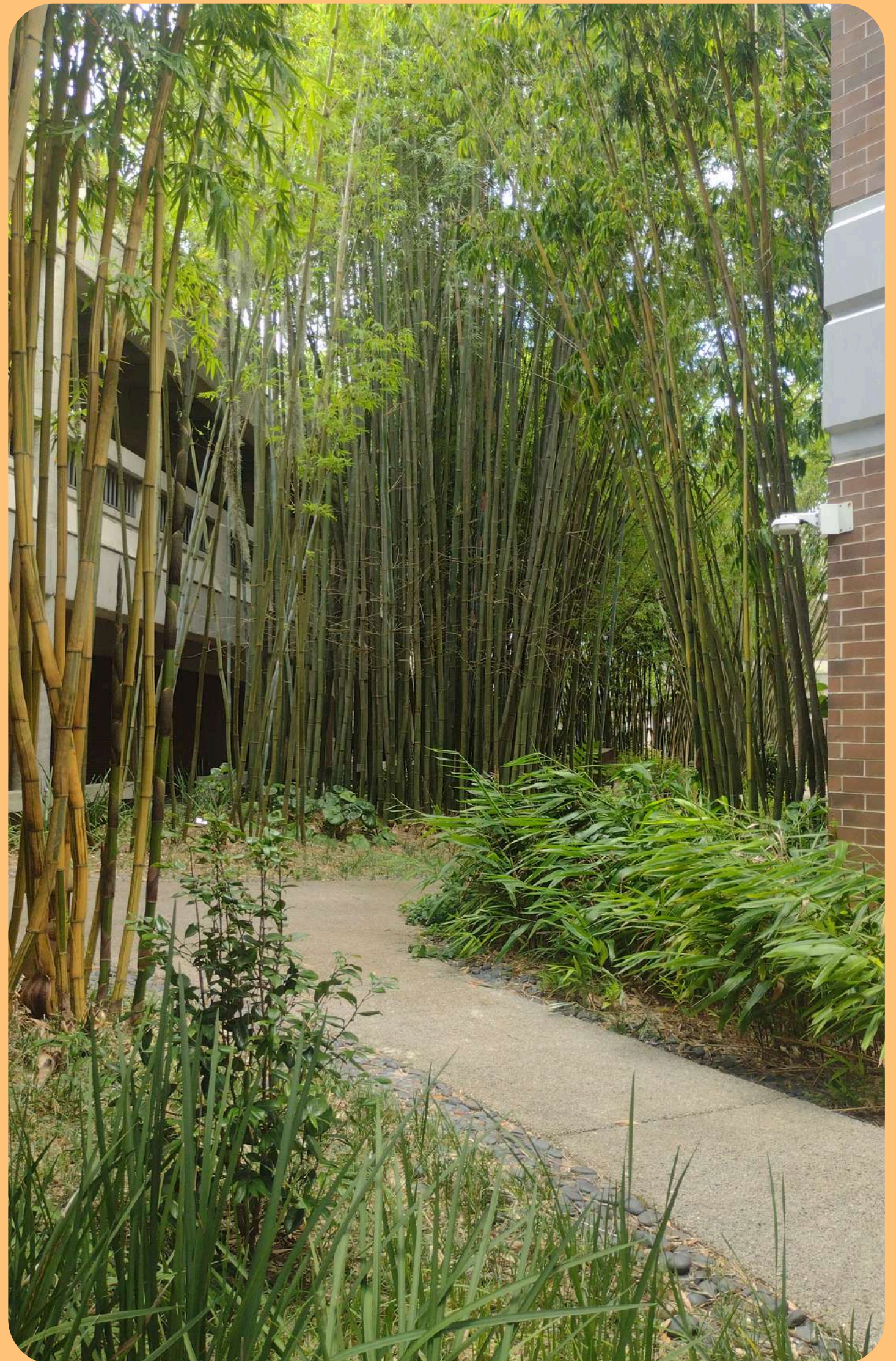
Amid all the hustle and bustle of Jacksonville's Town Center mall and the University of North Florida campus, plant lovers can find a hidden oasis – the UNF Botanical Garden.

The garden, less than one hour north of St. Augustine, is home to numerous and varied plant species. From the peaceful healing garden to the practical bioswale, the garden is definitely worth a visit. The “garden” is actually a series of garden areas that meander through the 1,600-acre campus.

The gardens all have different themes tied to UNF's educational mission. For example, the Setzer Family Healing Garden sits on the west side of the Brooks College of Health building. This area features a reflection pond, a labyrinth for meditation, herbs, various plants and scented flowers (like roses), and even hammocks (which are almost always in use). This garden's

location is appropriate, as Assistant Horticulturalist Holt Knight points out, as “scents can heal.” Scents can help reduce stress, anxiety, and pain, as well as improve a person's mood. Scents can also help cognition and memory. Take rosemary, for instance; this herb helps with memory, so students who smell rosemary while studying can bring a sprig with them at exam time and, hopefully, better recall the facts they learned. The campus rose garden and the bee patch includes student-created metal signs about eight of Florida's bee species, which are in this area as well.

Knight notes that UNF's Cycad Garden is very important because cycads are becoming rare – their habitat is being threatened by development. Botanical gardens ensure these unique and ancient plants do not become extinct. The coontie, Florida's most common cycad, abounds in the garden, as do other more rare species.



Hidden Paradise Awaits Plant Lovers at UNF Botanical Garden

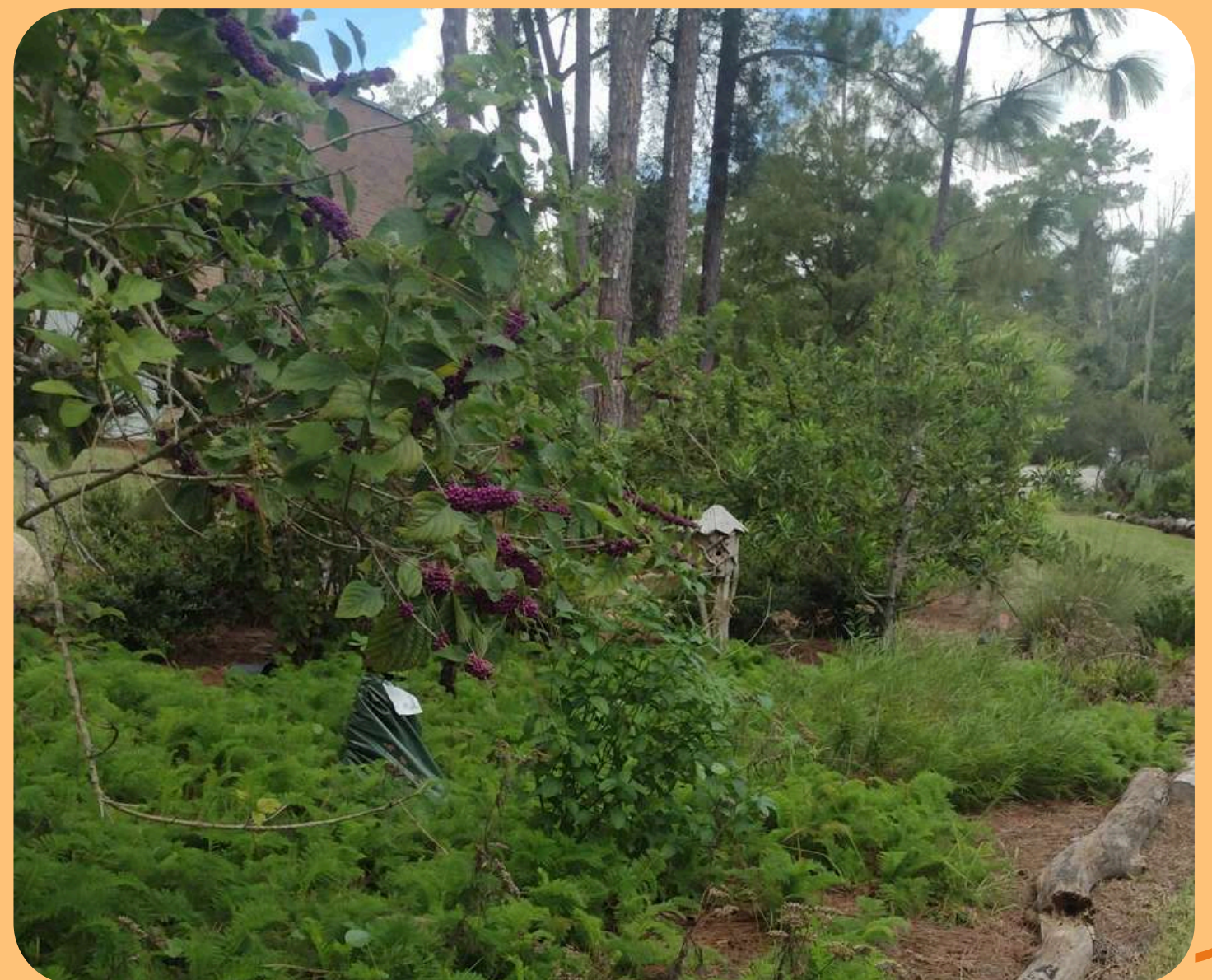
Lana Bandy
UF/IFAS Extension
St Johns County
Master Gardener
Volunteer

The campus' bioswale area is next to a busy road and was designed not just for beauty, but also to help flooding problems. The stones and plants in the bioswale filter pollutants from the stormwater that runs off the road. This means the water is cleaned before it gets to the aquifer below. The bioswale contains native plants with hardy roots that like wet and dry conditions. It is bordered by perennial peanut groundcover. The bioswale is also home to wildlife, including insects, birds, tortoises, frogs, and snakes. The grass pathway next to the bioswale is kept natural. There are weeds in the St. Augustine grass, 90% of the plants are native, and the walkway is bordered with logs. There are mature pines, beautyberry shrubs, coreopsis, native milkweed, and ferns, all living in patches of pine straw.

One of the most peaceful spots on campus is also one of the oldest -- the bamboo garden. Visitors can sit on benches, eat lunch in a shaded area, and walk down narrow paths to view the university's amazing collection of bamboos. Some bamboo species can grow two feet a day, and visitors can even hear this growth (water moving through the plant) if they put an ear up to a bamboo shoot and cover the other ear. According to Knight, bamboo is a grass, not a tree, and it has been used for many things, including buildings that can last thousands of years.

These gardens are next to each other on the east side of campus. Visitors who have more time can explore other parts of the campus and find a butterfly garden (near Boathouse Lake), the Frederick and Ophelia Tate Ogier Gardens (at the north end of campus), the peace plaza garden (between Founders Hall and J.J. Daniel Hall), and more.

The UNF Botanical Garden is free and open daily to the public.



A Beautiful and Carefree Landscape Option: Think Olives!

Norie Flowers
UF/IFAS Extension
St Johns County
Master Gardener
Volunteer



Most of the world's olives grow in southern European countries such as Spain and Italy. In the United States, California has more than 30,000 acres dedicated to olives. But Florida may be the next agricultural region for commercial olive production on farmland where commercial citrus production was lost as a result of Citrus Greening. And, olives trees are beautiful additions to home landscapes!

Commercial opportunity for this new option of olive grove production began when Dr. Lorenzo Rossi, a plant root biologist from Italy, came to the University of Florida around 2018 to begin working with UF scientists, the Indian River Research and Education Center, and the Olive Council, a nonprofit organization established in 2011 to support the then small group of Florida olive growers.

Dr. Rossi evaluated the now widely available citrus infrastructure and then explored whether these former orange groves would be suitable for large scale commercial olive production – a potential new and valuable cash crop for the state. Nineteen olive varieties were started, including Arbequina and Koroneiki, good olives for olive oil production. The next several years of research hope to yield enough data to determine which regions and cultivars will yield the best results to then provide informed decisions for Florida's commercial farmers.

Olives (*Olea europaea*) also have great potential as a landscape ornamental and may also provide opportunities for home fruit production.

Olive is a deciduous evergreen tree in the Olive family (Oleaceae). Leaves are opposite and elliptical with a narrow apex that is sharply pointed. Leaf color is very lovely and generally described as gray green, sometimes appearing almost white to silver. As with many evergreen species, the two- to three-year-old leaves usually fall at the same time new leaf growth appears in the spring.

A Beautiful and Carefree Landscape Option: Think Olives!

Norie Flowers

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer



Olive trees grow well on almost any well-drained soil up to a pH of about 8.5 and are tolerant of mild saline conditions. Sand-dominated soil is best and requires no amendments. Excessive nitrogen fertilization, in fact, can cause too much shoot growth at the expense of fruit production. Too much water from irrigation or rain will also make trees susceptible to root-rot disease and damage production by causing flowers to drop before they form fruits. Olive trees can also survive very extended dry periods.

Olive trees are generally pest and disease-free which makes them environmentally friendly – no need for pesticides! They just need to be planted in a sunny area with good drainage, either in-ground or in a large pot. The fruit of the olive tree is known as a drupe, a fleshy fruit with a stony seed in the center.

Olive fruits generally are green and become blackish purple when fully ripe, although some cultivars remain green when ripe or turn a shade of copper brown.

Olive tree flowers typically open in April or May in Florida but have been reported as early as February.

When visiting your favorite garden center, most of the olive trees you will see are not suitable for the dinner table and are usually the arbequina variety (as mentioned, great for olive oil production). Two good cultivar options that produce eating olives are Manzanilla and Mission. Olive trees are self-pollinating, but, as with other fruit bearing trees, planting more than one tree close together may increase fruit set.



A Beautiful and Carefree Landscape Option: Think Olives!

Norie Flowers

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer



Like citrus trees, don't be surprised or worried if your tree seems to take every other year off. Olives are described as alternate year-bearing species and typically have a year of heavy fruit production followed by a year of lighter production. You can take advantage of the lower producing years by pruning non-flowering branches during the flowering season. When heavier fruiting does take place, thin the crop of olives to two to three fruits per foot of twig. This will increase fruit size. Thinning should be done soon after fruit set.

If you would like a fun trip to an olive grove in Florida, one possibility is the Brooksville Olive Grove on the west coast of Florida. The owners, a Florida couple, visited Tuscany several years ago and fell in love with olive trees. When they returned to Florida, they bought a strip of land, planted numerous olive trees, and now have a thriving olive oil business at the site.

The best times to buy and plant an olive tree are either just ahead of dormant season or later in the early spring. There are several orchards, particularly in South Georgia, that sell the two European olive tree varieties mentioned and are easily accessible online. I have a mission olive tree doing very well in a large wooden barrel. Again, even though not intuitive, think less rich soil and instead vermiculite, perlite and sand for your olive tree. Our sandy soils are the perfect environment for olive trees!

All olive trees generally come with specific instructions and if you follow them, you will likely have great success. And, you will have a beautiful slice of the Mediterranean in your landscape!



Ask a Master Gardener

Tanya

Ghanjanasak

UF/IFAS Extension

St Johns County

Master Gardener

Volunteer

Is it better to start a garden in the fall than in the spring?

-Falling for Veggies



Dear Falling for Veggies,

Both seasons work in North Florida, but they shine for different crops. UF/IFAS planting calendars and the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide can help you with the best crops from fall through spring. In St. Johns County (Zone 9a), you can establish broccoli, cabbage, collards, carrots, beets, onions, and leafy greens like lettuce and spinach, along with herbs such as cilantro, dill, parsley, sage, and thyme. These crops prefer the moderate temperatures we get from fall into winter, and they reward you with better texture and flavor than heat-stressed summer plantings.

Also, as nights cool and days shorten, seedlings suffer less heat stress, soils hold moisture longer, and you'll spend less time irrigating than you would in the hot Florida midsummer. Cooler weather also slows many warm-season insect pests and plant diseases that flourish in summer, giving young plants a calmer start.

Spring is your warm-season window: after the last frost, plant tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, beans, southern peas, and melons. We recommend using the hottest weeks to solarize garden beds for 4–6 weeks under clear plastic, which helps reduce weeds, some soil-borne diseases, and certain nematodes. It is also a good time to test soil, adjust pH, and incorporate compost so your beds are ready the moment planting windows open. As we move into the cooler months, remember that irrigation needs drop, so adjust timers accordingly to avoid overwatering.

For specific crop lists, varieties, and month-by-month dates tailored to North Florida, check the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide and the North Florida Gardening Calendar on Ask IFAS (EDIS). If you'd like help interpreting those charts for your site, the UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County horticulture team can review your plan, look over your soil test, and suggest resilient varieties.

Happy Gardening!

Your local MG

ST. JOHNS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

Fall Plant Sale

FRIDAY-SATURDAY

**October
10-11**

9:00 am - 2:00pm

St. Johns County
Extension Office
3125 Agricultural Center Dr
St Augustine, FL 32092




Join us at the UF/IFAS St. Johns County Extension Office for our Master Gardener Fall Plant Sale! We will have landscape plants, houseplants, and vegetable seedlings available. We will also offer tours of the Demonstration Gardens on property.

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns/>



Seed Starting 101

Beautiful Gardens Begin with The Seed



Want to start your own veggies or flowers but don't know how? Master Gardener Volunteer and seeding expert Shirley Barber will teach the basics in Seed Starting 101.

\$10 Register here:



Tuesday October 7th @ 10:00am
3125 Agricultural Center Dr St
Augustine FL 32092





Raised Bed Gardening



Come learn how to build your own raised bed, container garden, or hydroponic set up! We will also cover what veggies to plant for the fall

October 24th @ 10:00 am
3125 Agricultural Center Dr
St Augustine FL 32092



\$10 Register Here:





Natives for Birds

In Collaboration with the St Johns Regional Audubon Society

Come learn why birds are so important for our local ecosystems with the St Johns Regional Audubon Society! We will also learn about different natives and their importance for birds.

NOVEMBER 7TH 2025 @ 10:00 AM

3125 AGRICULTURAL CENTER DR ST AUGUSTINE FL 32092

UF | **IFAS Extension**
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

An Equal Opportunity Institution



**FLORIDA
MASTER
GARDENER
VOLUNTEER**

Register here:





Holiday Plants

Come learn about the history and caretaking tips of your favorite holiday plants! We will cover poinsettia, Christmas cactus, amaryllis, and more!



November 18th at 10:00 am
3125 Agricultural Center Dr
St Augustine FL 32092

\$10 Register Here:



Greenery Workshop

Join us for a make-and-take holiday centerpiece workshop! Greenery and holiday themed supplies will be available to include in your centerpiece, wreath, or swag. BYO clippers, trimmers, or pruners.

December 19th 2025

Tickets \$20

Register here:

<https://tinyurl.com/532d7v8c>

3125 Agricultural Center Dr
St Augustine FL 32092

