

Fall 2023, Issue 28

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**Veggie Garden**

Bulbing onions, lettuce, arugula, spinach and more thrive this time of year. For a complete list, download the North FL Gardening Calendar: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/EP/EP45100.pdf> or The Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>



**Holiday Centerpiece  
Workshop**

Friday Dec. 15, 2023

10 am to 1 pm

\$25.00 Registration Fee

Pre-registration required,

Non-refundable

Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/greenery-centerpiece-workshop-tickets-724038467547?aff=oddtcreator>

Located at SJC Extension Auditorium  
3125 Agricultural Center Dr  
St. Augustine, FL 32092





**UF|IFAS**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



# *Master Gardener* **PLANT SALE**

FRIDAY & SATURDAY  
**October 20 & 21**

9:00 am - 2:00 pm.

## Where

St. John's County Extension  
3125 Agricultural Center Dr.  
St. Augustine, FL 32092

## What

MGV Fundraising Plant Sale  
MGV Plant Clinic  
Garden Tours



**CASH OR CHECK ONLY**

**[sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns](http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/stjohns)**

An Equal Opportunity Institution.

# Commercial Horticulture Upcoming Programs

## Limited Commercial Landscape Maintenance Training

**Date: Tuesday Oct 10, 2023**

**Time: 9 am to 4 pm**

**Location: St. Johns County Extension Windstorm Training Building**

**3111 Agricultural Center Dr**

**St. Augustine, FL 32092**

The Limited Commercial Landscape Maintenance/LCLM license requires this 6-hour training, proof of insurance, and a passing exam score. With the LCLM license, you can apply caution-labeled pesticides (including herbicides) to ornamental plant beds for your commercial clients. To decide whether the LCLM license is for you, check out the UF/IFAS publication, "Finding the Correct Pesticide Applicator License in Florida". It offers a helpful key and reference sheets for each license.

This class provides the required 6 hour training for LCLM. You will need to schedule your exam separately for a later date.

Lunch will be provided.

Preregistration on Eventbrite (\$53.08 with Eventbrite fees)

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/lclm-limited-commercial-landscape-maintenance-tickets-700255231247?aff=oddtcreator>



# Commercial Horticulture Upcoming Programs

## Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Certified Professional

**Date: Wednesday, Oct 18, 2023**

**Time: 9 am to 12:30 pm**

**Location: St. Johns County Extension Auditorium**

**Preregistration on Eventbrite: \$53.08 (includes Eventbrite fees)**

**Eventbrite registration link:**

**<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/florida-friendly-landscapingtm-certified-professional-fflcp-tickets-708647312187?aff=oddtcreator>**

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program offers a Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Certified Professional (FFLCP) designation to individuals who have completed the required training in FFL principles and are familiar with the latest UF/IFAS recommendations. These trained professionals have demonstrated the ability to recognize and address common landscape issues by using environmentally sustainable landscape management practices that help preserve and protect Florida's water and natural resources.

For more information: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/ffl-and-you/ffl-professional-certification/>

Prerequisite: Complete the 6 online modules prior to attending this field module to complete your training.



# *Nature's Ornaments*

Terra Freeman, Urban and  
Commercial Horticulture  
Agent, UF/IFAS Extension  
St. Johns County

Lichen, Spanish moss, and Ball moss are native epiphytes commonly found in our Florida landscapes. They are often a source of concern to homeowners who are unfamiliar with this non-parasitic life form. Often found living among live oaks or crape myrtles, epiphytes are harmless to their host plants and are an important component to biodiversity. Epiphytes provide unique habitat to native wildlife: Zebra longwing butterflies roost in Spanish moss at night, while songbirds, bats, and amphibians shelter in this gray-green tinsel-like member of the Bromeliad family.

Lichens are unique organisms consisting of a symbiotic relationship between alga and fungus. The fungus provides the ability to attach and anchor to the host plant, while the alga provides nutrients for the fungus. They can be leafy, flat, or hair-like, and develop in a variety of colors, including gray, white, black, yellow, green or red. Lichens can be quite fascinating when examined under a magnifying lens.

Epiphytes survive by harmlessly attaching themselves to other plants and collecting moisture and nutrients from the air. As sun-loving plants, they thrive in trees and other structures with open pockets of sunshine in humid environments. Because of their sun-loving nature, they can grow in abundance in plants with sparse branches or foliage that are already in decline. This may contribute to further decline on an already unhealthy tree if the moss or lichen prevents sunlight from reaching sections of leaves, which can prevent photosynthesis. In this case, it is important to figure out the underlying issue of the trees decline, such as cultural or environmental conditions or disease.

While epiphytes can be controlled using copper-based products, it is not recommended because they will look worse dead than alive and still need to be removed. If epiphytes appear in abundance beyond your preference, they can be removed by hand or with an extension pole. In most cases, Spanish moss, ball moss, and lichen are completely harmless and many find they add to the appeal of our southern landscape.

**References:** Spanish Moss, Ball Moss, and Lichens – Harmless Epiphytes: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP485>; Epiphytic Plants of Citrus in Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS1305>



Ball Moss



Spanish Moss



Lichen



# Pollination Syndromes

**Madeline Neyens**  
**Horticulture Program Assistant,**  
**UF/IFAS Extension St. Johns County**

Pollination syndromes refer to the specialized traits that flowering plants, or angiosperms, developed over time to draw the wandering eyes of pollinators like insects, birds, and bats. Pollinators rely heavily on cues such as scent, color, and shape, so you can encourage certain types of pollinators to visit your garden based on the types of plants you provide for them.

Pollinators see a vastly different garden than we do. Bees are known for being able to see light on the UV spectrum, but there is evidence that birds, bats, and other insects may also have this ability. Over time, flowers developed distinct UV patterns, or nectar guides, to draw in pollinators. These patterns are typically darker in the center of the flower, leading them directly to the nectar. This photo to the right shows how a flower appears to the human eye compared to how bees and other pollinators perceive it. If flowers did not have these patterns, it would be difficult for certain pollinators to know where to go.

The unique shape of certain flowers has developed over time to cater to the pollinators that favored those flowers already. These various shapes became more distinct and specialized, even to the point where the nectar of some flowers can only be reached by one species. Beetles and bats often visit bowl-shaped flowers, funnel-shaped flowers draw in bees and flies, and tubular flowers attract butterflies, moths, and birds.

The scent of a flower, or lack thereof, can give you hints as to what pollinators may visit it. Birds do not have a keen sense of smell, so the flowers they visit have little to no scent. Butterflies and bees pollinate fresh, pleasant-smelling flowers while beetles and flies prefer foul scents. It is not surprising that flies tend to visit flowers that smell like decomposing organic matter, among other unpleasant things. Nocturnal pollinators like moths and bats visit flowers that emit strong scents at night.

The next time you are out in your garden, observe the pollinators and see if their behaviors match these pollinator syndromes. You just might recognize a pattern you have never noticed before.

	<i>Bees</i>	<i>Butterflies</i>	<i>Moths</i>	<i>Flies</i>	<i>Beetles</i>	<i>Birds</i>	<i>Bats</i>
<i>Flower Color</i>	White, yellow, blue	Red, purple, anything bright	Dull red, purple, pink, white	Pale/dull, brown, purple, spotted	Dull white, green	Red, orange, yellow, white	White, green, purple
<i>Flower Scent</i>	Mild, pleasant	Mild, fresh	Strong sweet, emitted at night	Foul	Strong fruity, foul	None	Musty, emitted at night
<i>Flower Shape</i>	Shallow, funnel	Tubular sturdy perch	Regular, tubular	Shallow, funnel-like	Large bowl-shaped	Tubular, sturdy perch	Regular, bowl-shaped

Sources:

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/What\\_is\\_Pollination/syndromes.shtml](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/What_is_Pollination/syndromes.shtml)

[https://bio.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Botany/Botany\\_\(Ha\\_Morrow\\_and\\_Algers\)/02%3A\\_Biodiversity\\_\(Organismal\\_Groups\)/2.07%3A\\_Angiosperm\\_Diversity/2.7.02%3A\\_Pollination\\_Syndromes#:~:text=Over%20time%2C%20angiosperms%20evolved%20different,the%20pollinators%20for%20different%20plants.](https://bio.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Botany/Botany_(Ha_Morrow_and_Algers)/02%3A_Biodiversity_(Organismal_Groups)/2.07%3A_Angiosperm_Diversity/2.7.02%3A_Pollination_Syndromes#:~:text=Over%20time%2C%20angiosperms%20evolved%20different,the%20pollinators%20for%20different%20plants.)

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/Plant\\_Strategies/visualcues.shtml#:~:text=Many%20flowers%20use%20visual%20cues,shape%2C%20size%2C%20and%20color.](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/Plant_Strategies/visualcues.shtml#:~:text=Many%20flowers%20use%20visual%20cues,shape%2C%20size%2C%20and%20color.)

<https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/2023/03/09/importance-and-types-of-pollinators-did-you-know/>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/animals/birds.shtml#:~:text=In%20the%20continental%20United%20States,serve%20as%20tropical%20pollen%20vectors.>

# Uncommon Herbs in the Florida Garden

Pat Ludwig, Jane Palmer, Linda Mundy, and Pam Hutcherson  
Master Gardener Volunteers  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC



Rue

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Florida gardeners are very familiar with the pleasurable results of growing herbs in their garden. Herbs beautify our gardens and landscapes, supply a variety of ways to season our foods, provide medicinal benefits and add a pleasing fragrance to our landscape.

Gardeners today are continuing the tradition of growing and enjoying herbs, a practice that dates to ancient times. The Chinese grew herbs and compiled lists of herbs and their use in maintaining healthy body balance, as well as for treating ailments. In Egypt, pharaohs and commoners alike grew and used herbs for medicines and culinary spices as early as 2000 B.C. We can also thank the monks of the Middle Ages for cataloguing many herbs, and for using them to make Chartreuse and Benedictine D.O.M. liqueurs

There is a lot of information on common and familiar herbs, like oregano, parsley, basil, sage. However, there are many interesting herbs that

are not so familiar to Florida gardeners--rue, patchouli, borage, and anise hyssop which we've highlighted below.

**Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)** is an herb that falls into this lesser-known category. Rue is grown from seed, cuttings, or division. It's also known as the herb of grace and appears in Shakespeare's, *The Winter's Tale*, to signify repentance. A small, woody herb, Rue requires pruning to keep its shape. Rue is usually grown as an ornamental with its blue-green foliage, acting as a host plant to several types of swallowtail butterflies. While rue can be used in very small amounts as a flavor enhancer, it has high severity poison characteristics if used in large quantities. These include gastric distress, vomiting, confusion, and can be fatal.

**Patchouli (*Pogostemon patchouli*)** is becoming more common and has been used as an aromatic superstar. Patchouli is related to mint and has a similar pleasant scent. For that reason, Patchouli has many interesting uses. The essential oil from the Patchouli plant is used to manufacture soaps, detergents perfumes and cosmetics. Although not a dominant fragrance in many products, Patchouli's musky fragrance is used in aromatherapy, incense and candle making.



Patchouli

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# Uncommon Herbs in the Florida Garden

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UF/IFAS Extension SJC



Borage

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**Borage (*Borago Officinalis*)** Also called starflower, Borage was traditionally cultivated for culinary and medicinal uses. Borage can be used as a dried herb or a fresh vegetable. When used as a vegetable, it provides a cucumber-like taste to salads or used as a garnish. Borage is also used as a filling for ravioli pasta in parts of Italy.

Borage, one of the most photographed spices because of its beautiful flower, is an annual and the flower has a sweet, honey-like taste. The flower is also used to decorate desserts, cocktails and can be frozen in ice cubes for later use. In medieval times, Borage was thought to be an antidepressant and an herb that gave soldiers courage in battle.

As a word of caution, the oil of the Borage plant has small amounts of a compound that causes damage to the liver and should not be ingested without consulting your physician.

**Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)** is a taller, larger herb than most that bloom all summer in the southern climate. Anise Hyssop grows in a sunny environment and is propagated through seeds or root division and can self-sow. The flowers can be white, pale blue or lavender. This herb attracts bumblebees, hummingbirds, and butterflies. Birds are attracted to the seeds of the Anise hyssop.

We hope you enjoyed this glimpse into a few uncommon herbs. For more information on growing these uncommon and other herbs, feel free to contact our Extension office or research UF/IFAS Publications online.

**References:** <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/herbs.html>

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/anise-hyssop-agastache-foeniculum/>

[https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/garden\\_detail/herb-flower-cottage-garden/](https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/garden_detail/herb-flower-cottage-garden/)



Anise Hyssop

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# Native Orchids of St. Johns County, Florida

Karen Ford  
Master Gardener Volunteers  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC

The Orchidaceae family of flowering plants is one of the most species-rich groups on Earth. Because assessments on the population sizes of only a small fraction of the approximately 29,000 species have been conducted, the conservation status of most orchids remains unknown.



To address this, researchers recently conducted a machine-learning assessment of 13,000 species and concluded that as many as one-third are likely threatened with extinction. <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.13616>.

The primary reasons many orchids are in danger of extinction are habitat loss and human trade.

Because many orchids rely on symbiotic relationships with fungal species during germination and throughout their lives, and have mutualistic relationships with specific pollinators whose conservation status is often not known, they are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1600-0706.2008.17116.x> Biodiversity hotspots based on

endemic species richness, evolutionary distinctiveness, and range sizes have been identified worldwide to guide proposed habitat conservation for Orchidaceae. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-30177-y> In addition to habitat loss, international trade in orchids by collectors is so extensive that the Con-

vention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) lists all members of this plant family for protection and requires permits for trade between countries. <https://www.aos.org/about-us/orchid-conservation/cites.aspx>

Florida is home to 120 distinct orchid taxa, and like populations worldwide, many are threatened with extinction. <https://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Results.aspx?cat=family&text=Orchidaceae>.

Eighteen native species have been vouchered from wild populations in St. Johns County, seven of which are listed as Threatened and one is Endangered. If you are interested in finding these species in their native habitat, past documented locations can be found in the extensive plant atlas maintained by the University of South Florida.

# Native Orchids of St. Johns County, Florida

Karen Ford  
Master Gardener Volunteers  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC

For example, a herbarium specimen of one of 4 species of grass pinks that grow in St. Johns County, *Calapogon barbatus*, was collected along the roadside through mesic flatwoods and depression marsh "on the S side of FL 13, ca. 0.4 mi N of Meldrim Park, 2.3 air mi. SE of the junction of FL 208 and FL13 in Picolata ....29° 53' 23" N 81° 34' 2" W". [Herbarium Specimens Details - ISB: Atlas of Florida Plants](#)

[\(usf.edu\)](#). Though it can be thrilling to find a rare orchid in its native Florida habitat, please be respectful of its vulnerability and do not to disturb it. And if you happen to see one of these species for sale, question the seller to ensure it was propagated from seed or through tissue culture, and not collected from the wild.

Though many orchids worldwide are epiphytic, there is only one epiphyte confirmed growing in

St. Johns County, *Epidendrum magnoliae*



(previously named *E. conopseum*, the Green Fly Orchid), which is often found intermingled with resurrection fern on live oak trees. Its elongated leaves and lack of pseudobulbs are recognizable amongst the ferns, and when it blooms, its prominent yellowish green flowers are a treat to behold. It has bloomed recently in August on Anastasia Island.

The remaining 16 species found in St. Johns County are terrestrial. The Endangered *Hexalectris spicata* (Spiked Crested Coralroot) is my personal favorite local species. It



ranges in height from 10-80 cm and produces spikes of 5-25 flowers that are 2-4 cm each. *H. spicata* grows in live oak hammocks, where it blooms in the summer, producing beautiful flowers with brownish-yellow sepals

and petals containing purple striations, and a pale yellow lip with purple stripes.

# Native Orchids of St. Johns County, Florida

Karen Ford  
Master Gardener Volunteers  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC

This terrestrial orchid is entirely mycoheterotrophic: it does not produce chlorophyll and is entirely dependent on a symbiotic relationship with ectomycorrhizal fungi for nutrition. I first observed several of these orchids on an undeveloped lot in my neighborhood on Anastasia Island nearly 20 years ago. Unfortunately, I have not seen them since.



Two of Florida's 16 taxa of Ladies tresses orchids have been observed in St. Johns County:  
*Spiranthes praecox*  
(Greenvein ladytresses)



and *Spiranthes vernalis* (Spring Ladytresses), and both have been proposed to be listed as Endangered. The latter is a relatively tall (up to 40cm) terrestrial plant with a basal rosette of ovate leaves that wither at flowering time in the Spring. The 10-35 creamy yellow flowers, each only 4-5mm, are arranged in spiral pattern on a single rank, and can be observed in wet pine flatwoods

and along roadsides. In fact, an herbarium specimen of *Spiranthes vernalis* was collected in St Johns County in a roadside ditch along ramp from S-bound I-95 and FL 16, very near the St. Johns County Agricultural Extension Office. 29° 55' 6" N 81° 24' 48" W [Herbarium Specimen Details - ISB: Atlas of Florida Plants \(usf.edu\)](#). You may have noticed a lot of road construction in this location, so this population may now be

a victim of habitat loss. I know I will be looking for it this coming Spring.

Last but not least, if you're an orchid lover, you should know that one of the very

best websites on orchid cultivation in the United States is maintained by the St. Augustine Orchid Society, <https://staugorchidsociety.org/>. This group meets monthly with guest speakers from around the world. If you are looking for tips on growing exotic orchids in northeast Florida, look no further!

# Botanical Garden Tour

Lana Bandy,  
Master Gardener Volunteer  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC



Leu Gardens; Credit: Lana Bandy

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When looking for a “one-tank trip,” St. Johns County residents have a variety of options. For plant lovers, one of the best is less than two hours away – the Winter Park/north Orlando region.

This beautiful area, about 100 miles south of us, features several botanic gardens with plant varieties that will amaze even the most active gardeners.

Harry P. Leu Gardens has 50 acres of plants, trees, and flowers. They are well organized, so it’s easy to find your favorites. The arid garden features cacti, yuccas, and other drought-tolerant plants, while the butterfly garden includes shrubs and flowers of all kinds that attract butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. The camellia collection has more than 2,000 plants – the largest of its kind in the U.S. To see the camellias and other seasonal flowers (such as those in the azalea collection and

rose garden), make sure to plan your trip for the right time of year.

Each Leu Gardens area has a different feel. You will be in a sunny colorful garden one minute and a shady, tropical rainforest-like area the next. It’s not just flowers; there’s a vegetable garden, an herb garden, many fruit trees, and 400 or so palm species. Leu Gardens offers special events throughout the year; summer 2023 featured the “Dinosaurs, Now” exhibit, which was extremely popular with kids. The gardens are extremely well maintained and lush; the paths are easy to navigate, so nearly everything is accessible to visitors with strollers and/or wheelchairs.



Mead Botanic Garden: Credit: Lana Bandy

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# Botanical Garden Tour Continued

Lana Bandy,  
Master Gardener Volunteer  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC



Mead Botanic Garden: Credit: Lana Bandy

While there are numerous gazebos, benches, and shady spots, be sure to bring your water bottle, as you'll want to spend several hours strolling the serene grounds. And don't forget your camera!

The plants are clearly marked with their common and scientific name, and visitors will undoubtedly learn something new.

Just a few miles north of Leu Gardens, is Winter Park. This town, famous for its peacocks, fancy dwellings, and Rollins College, is home to the Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Gardens. This is a nice place to take a break and maybe even enjoy a picnic lunch. Polasek was a sculptor whose works are spread throughout the garden

behind the historic home (now a small art museum). The garden is full of native Florida plants and trees. The historic grounds are extra special because they abut the scenic Lake Osceola.

Also in Winter Park is Mead Botanic Garden. This garden is free and open to dusk, so it's an easy stop. The actual botanic part of the park is smaller than Leu, but it features numerous plant varieties. As you first enter, you'll notice the greenhouses and enormous staghorn ferns hanging from the oak trees. There's an orchid house and camellia trail as well as a cycads area. There are wetlands and ponds on the property as well as flatwoods and a native sandhill habitat. Yoga devotees may stumble upon a class in the amphitheater, and book lovers should check out the "little library."



Alvin Polasek Garden: Credit: Lana Bandy

# Sensory Gardens

Patty Plourde  
Master Gardener Volunteers  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC

A sensory garden is a self-contained garden area that allows visitors to enjoy a wide variety of sensory experiences. It is designed to provide opportunities to stimulate the senses, both individually and in combination. Sensory gardens are an accessible way for both disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy the journey through a garden. Sensory gardens can serve many functions, such as facilitating teaching, socializing, and therapy. They are perfect for young children, plus they promote health and enjoyment of nature for all ages (Jameson, 2019). In recent years, sensory gardens have been used to benefit children with autism as well as individuals exhibiting dementia.

## Design Considerations

To make a sensory garden, think about what feeling you would like people to experience while visiting the garden. Do you want a calm place for reflection or perhaps an energetic playful area for learning?

Hardscaping elements are important to consider. This may include a sitting area and perhaps even a climbing area with different textures. For example, consider grouping a circle of rough-textured tree stumps for seating.

Consider sensory pathways of various surfaces

such as sand, woodchips, crushed shells, or perhaps smooth, flat steppingstones. Accessories like gazing balls, mirrors, and sculptures add to the visual effect.

A sensory garden must be a safe place. Plants should be non-toxic, non-allergenic, and with no pesticide application. Blooms should be pollinated by insects rather than the plant releasing seeds in the air. Thorny plants like roses should be placed out of reach. (Gardener, 2023)

## Sense of Sight

Contrasting elements of color, form, movement, light, and shadow add to the sensory experience when we look at a beautiful garden. Red, orange, and yellow are warm colors that promote activity. Cool colors such as blue, purple, and white encourage tranquility.

## Sense of Hearing

Some sounds in a sensory garden occur without planning—the wind through leaves, for example. Enhance the variety of sounds by including trickling water and wind chimes. Adding bird feeders and a birdbath encourage a variety of birds to visit and share their songs. Leaves on the ground for people to crunch underfoot add to the interesting sounds of nature.



# Sensory Gardens

Patty Plourde  
Master Gardener Volunteers  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC



## Sense of Touch

When considering touch, think texture. Include soft flowers, fuzzy leaves, rough bark, prickly seed pods, and springy moss. Add smooth stones to your sensory garden. Touch gardens are especially enjoyable for children and people with visual impairment.

## Sense of Smell

Think about both subtle and strong smells that a person can explore both directly (by sticking her nose in the flower) and indirectly (for example by stepping on an aromatic groundcover). Examples of suitable plants include gardenias, nasturtium, and creeping thyme to name a few.

## The Sense of Taste

Providing visitors with an opportunity to experience tastes requires thoughtful consideration of plants and close monitoring. Allow visitors to explore tastes in the garden by growing edible flowers. Take care to differentiate them from non-

edible ones by placing them together in a designated area. Examples of edible plants include various herbs, violets, and pansies.

Without a doubt, sensory gardens are a creative and joyful means of exploring our senses while engaging in our natural environment.

## References:

Hubbard, P., Penn State Extension. *Creating a sensory garden*, July 5, 2023.

Jameson, M., UF/IFAS Extension. *Designing a sensory garden*, August 7, 2019.

UF/IFAS: Gardening Solutions, *Sensory Gardens*



# Cool Season Gardening

Shirley Barber,  
Master Gardener Volunteer,  
UF/IFAS Extension SJC

Right after Labor Day, the thought of cooler temperatures on the horizon revitalizes us and turns our attention to cool season gardening. We have survived one of the hottest summers on record and temperatures are starting to moderate into the 80's. We are on the threshold of the best gardening season with a vast array of plant varieties that thrive in cooler temperatures. Time to remove those tired and tattered plants of summer.

The best way to focus is to peruse online seed catalogs. Those gorgeous plant photos will tempt even the least interested and get the heart and mind dreaming of magnificent garden displays. If you feel adventurous, look for the newest introductions, as plant breeders are constantly creating new and unforgettable plant selections. The results of online viewing will be multiple seed orders with high hopes for great things to come. If you have been doing this for awhile, I'm sure you have several seed boxes in the fridge with so many possibilities, or perhaps seeds ordered last year that didn't make it to the seed trays. Don't forget to look at vegetables as a way to add beauty and drama to your garden beds. So many new varieties of kale, beets and Swiss Chard to please the eye!

Arrange your seed boxes with the upcoming cool season garden in mind. There are so many varieties and colors to select. Priority is given to varieties with the distinction of being All-America Selections® (AAS) Winners, which gives the comfort of knowing these plants have been trialed and selected for their superior attributes and performance.

Flower varieties for cool season gardening include many time-honored favorites: snapdragon, calendula, dianthus, gaillardia, larkspur, pansy, petunia, phlox, poppy, rudbeckia, statice, stock, and sweet alyssum...to name just a few.

Vegetables can be very colorful and beautiful in the garden. There are many varieties of Kale and Mustard, in an assortment of colors, sizes and textures. There are ways to use them for that special effect in the garden. Cool season vegetables to be considered: beet, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard, kale, kohlrabi, leek, lettuce/greens, mustard, mizuna, onion, pak choi, parsnip, potato, radish, shallot, and Swiss chard. Cool season herbs include cutting celery, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, parsley.

Of special note are a few AAS varieties that have excelled in the gardens at the St. Johns County Agriculture Center: petunias 'Tidal Wave Red Velour', 'Evening Scentsation', and 'Celebrity Chiffon Morn'. Dianthus varieties 'Ideal Violet', 'Supra Pink', and 'Jolt Pink'. Outstanding AAS Vegetables: Mizuna (Japanese Mustard), Mizuna 'Red Kingdom', Brussels Sprouts 'Hestia', and Kale 'Prizm'. Other favorite varieties without AAS distinction that performed well: Kale 'Redbor', Kale 'Black Magic', Mizuna 'Miz America', Sweet Alyssum 'Snow Crystals'. All are easily grown from seed.

Enjoy the delightful days ahead and visit the gardens at the St. Johns County Agriculture Center where you will find plenty of edible plants mingling with beautiful flowers!



Mizuna 'Miz America'



Mizuna 'Red Kingdom'



Purple Pak Choi.