



Good Citizen Guide to Natural Florida

Central Region

Learn about where you live

Florida's Central Region has a variety of natural areas with a host of flora and fauna to discover. Visit these areas to see the "real" Florida and appreciate their diversity. Seeing native plants in their natural communities can help you learn about what to plant in your landscape to make your yard more attractive and sustainable, while also reducing water consumption.



Discover some of the Region's native plant communities



Sandhill

Located on the ancient dunes of ridges and on hills with deep sands, this open grassy community is shaped by low intensity fires every 1-3 years. Plants for wildlife: bluejack oak, summer haw, wiregrass, and saw palmetto.

Where to visit Sandhill

- Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County)
- Lake Griffin State Park (Lake County)
- Ocala National Forest, Clearwater Lake Recreation Area (Lake County)
- Ocala National Forest, Riverside Island (Marion County)



Scrub

Community variation includes rosemary, oak, and sand pine scrub. Scrub developed over long periods of time in isolated patches, resulting in unique species. Intense fires occur every 20-80 years. Plants for wildlife: myrtle oak, yaupon holly, and sparkleberry.

Where to visit Scrub

- Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County)
- Ocala National Forest, Juniper Springs Recreation Area (Marion County)
- Seminole State Forest (Lake County)
- Tavares Nature Park (Lake County)



Pine Flatwoods

Florida's most common community, flatwoods, are characterized by their lack of topography, open canopy of longleaf pine, and understory of saw palmetto. Soil moisture ranges from dry to wet. Saw palmetto is one of the best plants for wildlife food and shelter.

Where to visit Pine Flatwoods

- Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County)
- Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway (Marion and Putnam Counties)
- Ross Prairie State Forest (Marion County)
- Seminole State Forest (Lake County)



Mesic Hammock

Oaks, hickory, and magnolia dominate with a lack of fire. Soils drain slowly and contain organic material for a rich, cool, and shady forest. Plants for wildlife: American beautyberry, cherry laurel, and Virginia creeper vine.

Where to visit Mesic Hammock

- Flat Island Preserve (Lake County)
- Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County)
- Lake Okahumpka Park (Sumter County)
- Lake Panasoffkee Outlet Park (Sumter County)
- Lake Panasoffkee Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County)
- Welaka State Park (Putnam County)



Spring Run Stream

Among the most productive aquatic habitats, springs run clear and cold from artesian openings in the underground aquifer. Springs are negatively affected by pollutants from agriculture, residential, and industrial land uses, and drawdown from over-irrigation.

Where to visit Spring Run Stream

- Half Moon Wildlife Management Area (Sumter County)
- Ocala National Forest, Alexander Springs Recreation Area (Lake County)
- Rainbow Springs State Park (Marion County)
- Ray Wayside Park (Marion County)



Lakes

Sandhill upland lakes and sinkhole lakes are shallow and formed by limestone topography with a variety of plants along shorelines acting as fish nurseries, and bird nesting and feeding habitat. Plants for wildlife: buttonbush, duck potato, red maple, and pickerelweed.

Where to visit Lakes

- Lake Griffin State Park (Lake County)
- Lake Panasoffkee (Sumter County)
- Ocala National Forest, Clearwater Lake (Marion County)
- Palm Island Park (Lake County)



Floodplain Forest

Floodplain forests contain water-loving trees on frequently or permanently flooded soils. Trees have a swollen or buttressed appearance at the base and understory and groundcover species are sparse. Plants for wildlife: bald cypress, swamp tupelo, red maple, and water hickory.

Where to visit Floodplain Forest

- Lake Griffin State Park (Lake County)
- Ray Wayside Park (Marion County)
- Silver River State Park (Marion County)

Easy to grow native plants for home landscapes in the Central Region



Bring the beauty of native plants home

Florida's Central Region has many beautiful native plant communities. In addition to visiting them, you can bring a bit of natural Florida to your landscape by planting natives. Fortunately there are many options to choose from and many plants are adaptable to a wide range of conditions. Plant selection and planting advice is available from Florida Native Plant Society chapters as well as local extension agents and nurseries. Here are just a few suggestions for plants to consider for home gardens and landscapes.

Rain garden



- (1) *Iris virginica* (blue flag iris)
- (2) *Conoclinium coelestinum* (blue mistflower)
- (3) *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum* (cinnamon fern)
- (4) *Viola sororia* (common blue violet)
- (5) *Zephyranthes atamasca* (rain lily)
- (6) *Magnolia virginiana* (sweetbay magnolia)

Butterfly garden

- (1) *Vernonia angustifolia* (tall ironweed)
- (2) *Passiflora incarnata* (passionflower)
- (3) *Amorpha fruticosa* (false indigo)
- (4) *Coreopsis lanceolata* (lanceleaf tickseed)
- (5) *Lonicera sempervirens* (coral honeysuckle)
- (6) *Liatris species* (blazing star)



Shady garden

- (1) *Bignonia capreolata* (crossvine)
- (2) *Rivina humilis* (rouge plant)
- (3) *Heliotropium angiospermum* (scorpion's tail)
- (4) *Stokesia laevis* (Stoke's aster)
- (5) *Rhododendron canescens* (sweet pinxter azalea)
- (6) *Ilex vomitoria* (yaupon)



The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to preserve, conserve and restore the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Florida Native Plant Society

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