



## Good Citizen Guide to Natural Florida

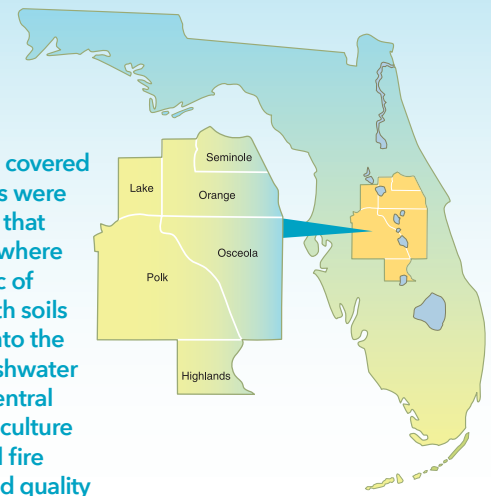
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### Central Ridge Region

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#### Learn about where you live

Two million years ago most of Florida was covered by water and only a small series of islands were dry. Some of these islands formed ridges that supported distinctive life forms found nowhere else. Today, these ridges contain a mosaic of upland habitats, freshwater wetlands (with soils that recharge, hold, and filter rainwater into the aquifers that are central Florida's sole freshwater source), and transitional ecotones. The Central Ridge area is prime land for logging, agriculture and human habitation. Development and fire suppression have reduced the quantity and quality of the remaining natural ecosystems.



#### Discover some of the Region's native plant communities



##### Sandhill

Sandhill is a fire-dependent plant community with well-drained, sandy soil important for aquifer recharge. It is characterized by widely spaced longleaf pine and/or turkey oak with a diverse understory of grasses (particularly wiregrass), sparse woody shrubs, and wildflowers. Today, only 2-3 percent of undisturbed sandhill habitat, home to many rare and endemic plants and animals, remains.

##### Where to visit Sandhill

- Archbold Biological Station (Highlands County)
- Hilochee Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (South Lake County)
- Lake Proctor Wilderness Area (Seminole County)
- Three Lakes WMA (Osceola County)
- Tiger Creek Preserve (Polk County)
- Wekiwa Springs State Park (Orange County)



##### Scrub

Scrub occurs on old dunes with deep fine sand soils that are extremely well-drained and have little organic matter. In healthy scrub, trees are seldom taller than ten feet and there are open patches of sand. This community depends on fire to regenerate. Scrubs of the central ridge (Lake Wales Ridge) are Florida's most endangered plant community and are home to one of the rarest collections of plants and animals in the world, including high numbers of endemic plants (those found nowhere else in the world).

##### Where to visit Scrub

- Bill Frederick Park (Orange County)
- Herky Huffman/Bull Creek WMA (Osceola County)
- Lake Louisa State Park (South Lake County)
- Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area (Highlands County)
- Saddle Blanket Lakes Preserve (Polk County)
- Seminole State Forest (Seminole County)



##### Flatwoods

The most common natural community in Florida, flatwoods (wet, mesic or scrubby based on soil moisture) are found in flat areas characterized by sandy soils, scattered pines, few shrubs, and a diverse groundcover of grasses and wildflowers. Frequent fire prevents succession to upland forest.

##### Where to visit Flatwoods

- Lake Louisa State Park (South Lake County)
- Lake Wales Ridge State Forest (Highlands County)
- Sumica Wilderness Preserve (Polk County)
- Tosohatchee WMA (Orange County)
- Triple N Ranch WMA (Osceola County)
- Wekiwa Springs State Park (Seminole County)



##### Dry and Wet Prairie

Dry prairie is similar to flatwoods with few to no trees. Dominated by grasses, rushes, palmetto, and low herbaceous plants, this community seldom floods, is fire-dependent and provides a rich, seasonal, wildflower display. Wet prairie is the least frequently flooded type of marsh, and vegetation includes a diversity of sedges, grasses and wildflowers with few shrubs and few scattered trees.

##### Where to visit Dry and Wet Prairie

- Colt Creek State Park (Polk County)
- Hal Scott Preserve (Orange County)
- Hickory Hammock WMA (Highlands County)
- Hilochee WMA (South Lake County)
- Lake Harney Wilderness Area (Seminole County)
- Three Lakes WMA (Osceola County)



### Freshwater Forested Wetlands

Wetlands (swamps, marshes, ponds, lakes and river floodplains) are areas with saturated soils that support plants that are able to grow and reproduce with “wet feet”. Some wetlands remain flooded and some dry out for brief or long periods. Swamps contain woody plants while marshes are primarily herbaceous. Originally covering about 60 percent of the state’s landmass, wetlands have been reduced to less than half of that by drainage and subsequent development and are further threatened by runoff.

### Where to visit Freshwater Forested Wetlands

- Black Hammock Wilderness Area (Seminole County)
- Crooked River Preserve (South Lake County)
- Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve (Polk County)
- Herky Huffman/Bull Creek WMA (Osceola County)
- Highlands Hammock State Park (Highlands County)
- Little Big Econ Forest (Orange County)

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



### Bring the beauty of native plants home

Florida’s Central Ridge 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.

#### Plants for pollinators



##### Shrubs:

- (1) *Hamelia patens* (firebush) \*S/Sh, M/H
- (2) *Hypericum tenuifolium* (St. John’s wort) \*S/Sh, L/M
- (3) *Viburnum obovatum* (Walter’s viburnum) \*S/Sh, M/H

##### Wildflowers:

- (4) *Monarda punctata* (dotted horsemint) \*S/Sh, L
- (5) *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* (blue porterweed) \*S, M

##### Vines:

- (6) *Lonicera sempervirens* (coral honeysuckle) \*S, M

#### Plants for birds

##### Shrubs:

- (1) *Callicarpa americana* (American beautyberry) \*Sh, L/M/H
- (2) *Ilex vomitoria* (yaupon) female plants \*Sh, L/M
- (3) *Psychotria nervosa* (wild coffee) \*Sh, M/H
- (4) *Myrcianthes fragrans* (Simpson’s stopper) \*S, M/H

##### Wildflowers:

- (5) *Solidago* species (goldenrod) \*S, L/M

##### Grasses:

- (6) *Sorghastrum secundum* (lopsided Indiangrass) \*S/Sh, L/M



### Invasive non-native plants

Avoid planting these species and remove them from the landscape:

- (1) *Sphagneticola trilobata* (wedelia)
- (2) *Syngonium* species (arrowhead vine)
- (3) *Kalanchoe* species (mother of millions)
- (4) *Ruellia simplex* (Mexican petunia)
- (5) *Lantana strigocamara* (lantana)
- (6) *Nephrolepis cordifolia* (Boston fern)



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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\*S = Sunny; Sh = Shady; S/Sh = Sun to part shade

L = Low soil moisture; M = Medium soil moisture; H = High soil moisture