

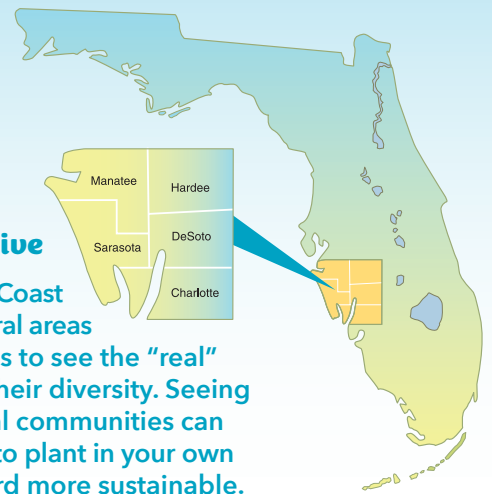


Good Citizen Guide to Natural Florida

Southwest Central Coast Region

Learn about where you live

Florida's Southwest Central Coast Region has a variety of natural areas to discover. Visit these areas to see the "real" Florida and to appreciate their diversity. Seeing native plants in their natural communities can help you learn about what to plant in your own landscape to make your yard more sustainable.



Discover some of the Region's native plant communities



Scrub

Scrub is easily recognized by the dominance of woody shrubs and frequent patches of bare, white sand. It occurs on old dunes with deep, well drained, sandy soils. Scrub is the natural home of the endemic Florida scrub jay.

Where to visit Scrub

- Amberjack Environmental Park (Charlotte County)
- Duette Preserve (Manatee County)
- Oscar Scherer State Park (Sarasota County)
- Rye Preserve (Manatee County)
- Tippecanoe Environmental Park (Charlotte County)



Dry Mesic Hammock

Dry mesic hammocks include oak, slash pine, and sabal palm, and create shade under dense canopies. Massive oak branches host an array of epiphytes such as bromeliads. Sandy soil is common and supports understory plants, including saw palmetto.

Where to visit Dry Mesic Hammock

- Alligator Creek Preserve (Charlotte County)
- Jelks Preserve (Sarasota County)
- Oaks Park (Sarasota County)
- Myakka River State Park (Manatee County)



Mangrove Swamp

Mangroves grow in brackish areas inundated by tides. Mangrove swamps have little diversity and species are salt-tolerant, including red, white, and black mangrove and buttonwood. Mangroves protect the coastline from erosion and provide critical protection for young fish.

Where to visit Mangrove Swamp

- Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park (Charlotte County)
- Emerson Point Preserve (Manatee County)
- Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center (Sarasota County)



Coastal Grassland

Coastal grassland habitats show moderate diversity in plant life and depend on salt-tolerant species. Sea oats and similar plants are valuable anchors near the shoreline and taller plants like saw palmetto, sea grape, and prickly pear cactus grow farther back.

Where to visit Coastal Grassland

- Blind Pass Beach (Sarasota County)
- Caspersen Beach (Sarasota County)
- Stump Pass Beach State Park (Charlotte County)



Mesic Flatwoods

Mesic flatwoods have a high canopy of tall pine trees over an understory of grasses and saw palmetto. Wildflowers flourish in the sandy soil and small basin marshes may dot the area, supporting moisture-loving plants such as bladderwort and sundew.

Where to visit Mesic Flatwoods

- Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park (Charlotte County)
- Deep Creek Preserve (Desoto County)
- Myakka State Forest (Sarasota County)
- Oscar Scherer State Park (Sarasota County)



Estuaries

Estuaries occur where salty water from the ocean mixes with fresh water, usually from a river. The water is often partially enclosed or cut off from the ocean and may consist of channels, sloughs, mud and sand flats, lagoons, and bays.

Where to visit Estuaries

- Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park (Charlotte County)
- Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center (Sarasota County)
- Oyster Creek Environmental Park (Charlotte County)



Basin Marsh

Basin marshes are shallow depressions usually found in sandy soils and fire-maintained areas such as dry prairies. Vegetation includes grasses on the outer edges with aquatic species such as pickerelweed and water lily in the deeper sections.

Where to visit Basin Marsh

- Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park (Charlotte County)
- Duette Preserve (Manatee County)
- Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area (Charlotte County)
- Myakka Islands Point Preserve (Sarasota County)

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



Bring the beauty of native plants home

Florida's Southwest Central Coast 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.

Dry garden



Overstory: (1) *Sabal palmetto* (sabal palm)

Understory: (2) *Silphium asteriscus* (starry rosinweed); (3) *Erythrina herbacea* (coral bean)

Flowers: (4) *Helianthus debilis* subsp. *vestitus* (West coast dune sunflower); (5) *Lonicera sempervirens* (coral honeysuckle); (6) *Rudbeckia hirta* (black-eyed Susan)

Shady pollinator/bird garden

Overstory: (1) *Ardisia escallonioides* (marlberry). Not pictured: *Ilex cassine* (Dahoon holly)

Understory: (2) *Callicarpa americana* (American beautyberry); (3) *Psychotria nervosa* (wild coffee)

Flowers: (4) *Tradescantia ohiensis* (spiderwort); (5) *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* (blue porterweed); (6) *Rivina humilis* (rouge plant)



Sunny pollinator garden

Shrubs: (1) *Senna ligustrina* (privet cassia); (2) *Hamelia patens* (firebush)

Flowers: (3) *Passiflora suberosa* (corkstem passionflower); (4) *Monarda punctata* (dotted horsemint); (5) *Salvia coccinea* (tropical sage); (6) *Asclepias incarnata* (pink swamp milkweed). Not pictured: *Passiflora incarnata* (purple passionflower)



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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