

THE IMPORTANCE OF FLORIDA NATIVE PLANTS

Why are native plants important

- Native plants combat climate change
- Remove carbon from the air
- Native plants require less water
- Reduces noise and pollution from lawn care
- Provide shelter and essential food for wildlife
- Promote biodiversity

A must read book **Natures Best Hope, by Doug Tallamy** A new approach to conservation that starts in your yard

Insects and pollinators rely on native plants to lay eggs on, and to feed from. Our insect and pollinator populations continue to decline at an alarming rate.

WHY ARE INSECTS SO IMPORTANT?

Because without insects we would not have songbirds!!! Songbirds raise their young on animal protein and in the case of songbirds this animal protein comes in the form of insects.

Another conservation effort called **Pollinator Pathways** promotes establishing pollinator friendly habitats and good sources for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating insects and wildlife.

One of the very first steps to take in achieving this is by gardening organically no chemicals or pesticide use

It's easier than you think to create a new garden bed by using cardboard. Use a hose or string to lay out your bed shape. Place your plants and then use cardboard around them to kill the surrounding grass or weeds and place mulch on top.

I strongly recommend only using **Florimulch**. This mulch is derived from the invasive melaleuca tree. By purchasing this mulch you are helping to preserve Florida's wetlands and promoting wetland restoration.

Other ways you can become more involved

Homegrown National Park

<https://map.homegrownnationalpark.org>

Grassroots call to action to regenerate biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and creating ecological network

- Get on the map!

Florida Native Plant Society

<https://fnps.org>

To promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

- Join a local chapter

Recommended Tree list to support songbirds

- Willow
- Live Oak
- Sabal Palm
- Pine- Slash and Longleaf
- Florida Myrsine
- Jamaica Caper
- Sea Grape
- Red Mulberry
- Yaupon Holly
- Dahoon Holly
- Sugarberry

- Buttonwood/ Silver and Green
- Fig/Strangler and Citrus

Recommended Shrub list to attract songbirds

- Firebush
- Wax Myrtle
- Bahama Strongbark
- Lantana Floridana
- Pineland lantana
- Button sage
- Pokeweed
- Gray leaf tea bush
- Saw Palmetto
- Simpsons, Red, White, Spanish and, and Redberry Stoppers
- Rouge Plant
- Bird Pepper
- Coontie (cycad)

Recommended Vine list to attract songbirds

- Coral Honeysuckle
- Grape
- Virginia creeper
- Corkystem passion vine
- Twinevine
- Passion vine
- Trumpet Creeper

- Poison Ivy

Recommended Seed producing plants to attract songbirds

- Salvias
- Coreopsis
- Black- Eyed Susan
- Aster
- Sunflower

Grasses

In conclusion native plants support bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, songbirds and all wildlife which will include nibbling rabbits, digging armadillos and snakes in the gardens, all should bewelcome visitors.