



Leon County Landscaping



Fellows: Mary Noonan & E Thomas

Project Partner: John Leeds with Leon County Facilities Operations

Introduction:

Many publicly owned buildings in Tallahassee have landscaping that leaves something to be desired. This is understandable, as local governments have many responsibilities to attend to, and plant care can be complicated and expensive. Fortunately, certain plants are easier to care for, specifically Florida native and Florida friendly plants. They do well in our state's climate, typically requiring less intricate care, and they benefit our local pollinators like bees, butterflies, and birds. They can also help to keep temperatures down in areas with lots of concrete during the summer, and help reduce erosion along banks, if the right plants are put in the right place. This issue, and these benefits, guided our sustainability project this semester.

Goal:

Our goal was to make native plant care easier and more accessible for those involved in the landscaping of publicly owned spaces. We created a guidebook of Florida native and Florida friendly plant species including information on how to care for them and what conditions they thrive in.

Methodology:

Our research was primarily conducted online. We researched Florida native and Florida friendly plant species and their care. We found information on when to plant certain plants, what their sun and water needs are like, if they need any additional care such as pruning, and whether or not they're prone to pest or disease issues. We used many different online resources, but primarily referred to the UF/IFAS (University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Studies) website to find our information. The guidebook itself was put together using Adobe InDesign, and is organized by plant type including flowers, groundcover, shrubs, and trees.

2023 PLANT GUIDE

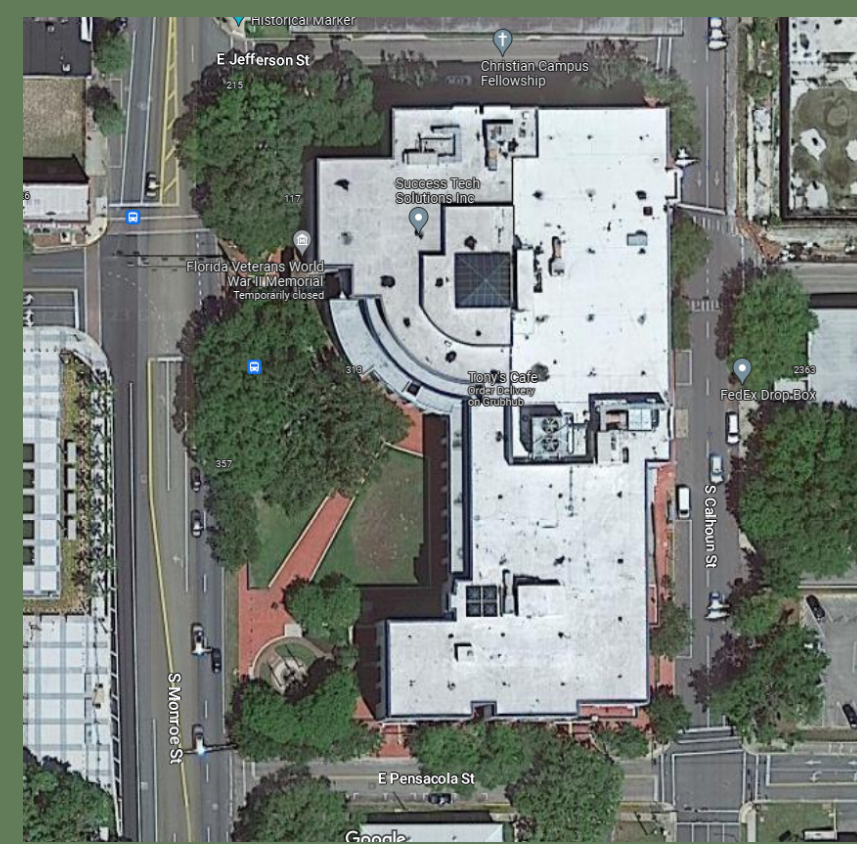


- Perennial
- 4-5 ft.
- Full Sun
- Sandy clay, well drained
- Medium drought resistance
- Spring Planting

Should be planted in spring or fall, needs consistent watering to get established, but after that, should be watered at a frequency that allows the ground to dry between waterings. Removing dead flower stalks can be beneficial but is not strictly necessary. Prone to root rot if the soil stays too moist, but no other major common issues.



Site 1: Collins Main Library
200 W Park Ave.



Site 2: Leon County Courthouse
301 S Monroe St.



Site 3: Lake Jackson Town Center
3840 N Monroe St.



- Perennial
- 1 - 4 ft.
- Direct sun
- Drought resistant
- Plant Fall or Spring
- Sandy or loamy soil, or even clay, and acidic or slightly alkaline soil

Coreopsis does just fine without fertilizer and thrives in poor soil. Neglect these deer-resistant plants and they will still reward you with attractive flowers.

FLOWERS

AFRICAN IRIS (*DIETES IRIDOIDES*)



- Perennial
- 2-3 ft tall and 3-4 ft wide
- Full sun, any soil texture, well drained
- Flowers march-september

Needs regular watering to become established. (Till the plant is about 2 years old), but then becomes very drought tolerant and needs no special watering.

ANGELONIA (*ANGELONIA ANGUSTIFOLIA*)



- Perennial
- 1-1.5 ft tall
- Frost resistant
- Full sun, well drained, any texture soil
- Flowers march-november

Needs relatively consistent watering to become established, but after is drought tolerant and doesn't need frequent watering. No other special care notes.

BLAZING STAR (*LIATRIS SPP.*)



- Perennial
- 2-4 ft.
- Full Sun
- Well Drained Soil

Plants will die back after blooming, but some will reappear in spring. Some plants last for years. Blazing Stars are also reliable reseeder, and you can collect and plant seed where you want it or allow the plants to self-seed. Learn to recognize young leaves so you don't weed out your baby Blazing Stars.

BULBINE (*BULBINE FRUTESCENS*)



- Perennial
- 3-4 ft.
- Full sun
- Any texture soil, well drained
- Flowers march-september

Bulbine's succulent, grass-like foliage forms a clump and provides a nice texture contrast when surrounded by other plants. The species reaches 2 feet tall when flowering and has a 3-4 foot spread. The cultivar 'Hollimark' is smaller and taller, topping out at 6-10 inches with only a 2 foot spread. Its delicate buds have a unique green center stripe, opening to deep orange flower spikes with fifty yellow stamens.



Florida Plant Hardiness Zone Map (Source: USDA)

Conclusions & Recommendations:

Ultimately, we hope this guide can make Leon county publicly owned spaces more environmentally friendly, and more visitor friendly by making it easier for the county to know what native plants will do the best at a given site and how to care for those plants.

References:

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/native-plants.html>

Results:

In the end, we created a guidebook for Leon County officials to reference whenever undertaking landscaping projects. It features 46 Florida native and Florida friendly plant species and care instructions for them.