In South Florida, intentional and spontaneous spaces emerge through the interdependency of plants that serve various roles for humans, animals, and the environment. These spaces provide sustenance, refuge, safety, artistic expression, a source of local pride, and complex memories. While the layered composition of the landscaped areas mirror the intricate layers of the surrounding ecosystem, it is fostering a bittersweet mix of emotions among its people as they admire its beauty yet often face the challenges of environmental and economic changes with its existence. Space continues to define place, placement and purpose. Space has traditionally defined our food. The food we enjoy every day can be a conduit for sharing our culture, our stories and ourselves. Connecting nationalities and generations, food creates an opportunity to exchange cultural values and traditional plant knowledge. Food connects us in community.

Food unites us.
Food restores people.
Food restores the land.

South Florida is situated in a unique subtropical climate that has provided the nation with food for decades. The area is defined by Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades watershed, connecting the inhabitants to both the land and the water that characterize the region. As educators it is our purpose to support sustainable stewardship of our land and water resources to lessen our impact on our environment and promote food resilience within our communities. The plants we use as food, medicine, and natural products in our everyday life tells a story about who we are and where we come from. As we share these stories, we bridge cultures and traditions through our relationship to the land.
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SEASONS CALENDAR

Traditional Spring

February - April

Agua Regresa y Calor

May - July

November - January

First Harvest

August - early October

Tempo delas Aguas
South Florida exists on a body of land that carries over 15,000 years of indigenous history. Thousands of Native people lived here before the European explorers first arrived in the 16th century. On the East Coast of South Florida the Ais, Jeaga, Mayaimi (Belle Glade Culture) and Tequesta were hunter-gatherers living off the natural landscape and coastal waters. On the Southwest Coast, the Calusa, fierce warriors against the incoming Spanish, lived and navigated the Gulf coastal waterways, building large community systems. Further South, the Florida Keys’ early tribes known as the Matecumbe, also lived off the warm and island waterways, wildlife. Within 200 years of European contact, South Florida tribes were gone, erased due to outsider warfare, and 18th century people, known today as the Seminole, Miccosukee, and Independent tribes lived in Florida, and made the Florida Everglades and surrounding landscapes their home despite surviving war violence and forced relocation against them during the Seminole Wars. Who we are today is because of those who came before us who took care of this land and lived respectfully off of its resources.
We are called to acknowledge the history of pain, disease, and bloodshed endured because of colonization and erasure. We are called to prayer for those first people who lost their sovereignty, yet show us today their resolve to keep sacred traditions and culture alive for their community, focused on building collaborative efforts like so many leaders and artists who are helping to tell the story of places like the Everglades, known as the River of grass.

We pray for this history of water, all through our region. We pray for nurturing the soil that it may grow not only food to eat today, but revitalize the land to sustain future seeds, and people. We acknowledge those who plant and harvest food here now, Who are building the vibrant diaspora we see all around us. We send them blessings for safety and freedom, and joy. We commit to sustaining this earth so it will continue to sustain us, our children and grandchildren. We commit to give more and take less from this fragile earth.
Harvesting wild edible plants

Exploring Florida’s many ecosystems one may encounter many edible plants that have traditional uses and can provide a nutritious or curious addition to any meal. South Florida is a subtropical ecoregion with several distinct ecosystems that include edible plants. The calendar below is based on observation and in consultation with local horticulturalists. There are many more plants than listed here so please use this as a log and reference your own favorite wild edibles in the calendar also.
**MUSHROOMS**
- Chantarelles July-September
- Pine Flatwoods, oak hammock or Coastal Sea Grape stands
- Chicken of the woods April-Sept.
  - Oak Hammock
- Oyster Mushrooms March - July
  - Oak hammock or pine flat woods
- Indigo milk cap July-September
  - Oak hammock

**FLOWERS**
- Spanish Bayonette July-Aug.
  - Coastal
- Nasturtium November-March
  - Open areas
- Perennial Peanut April-Sept.
  - Open areas
- Coral Honeysuckle April-Sept.
- Wild Violets- Nov. to March

**HERBS/GREENS**
- Lambs Quarters November-March
  - Rangelands or disturbed areas
- Smilax All year
  - Uplands, harvest newest fresh growth tips and shoots
- Spanish needle April-August
  - Uplands and disturbed areas- whole plant
- Spiny pigweed June-September
  - Disturbed areas, tender new leaves
- Purslane February-September
  - Open areas/lawns, leaves
- Pine needle tips February - April
  - Pine Flatwoods

**FRUITS**
- Muscadine Grapes Aug- Sept.
  - Oak hammock and pine flatwoods
- Sea Grape July-September,
  - Coastal dunes
- Hog Plum or Tallowwood
  - Spring and Fall
  - Scrublands/coastal dunes
- Red Mulberry June- Sept.
  - Uplands
- Cocoplum July-September
  - Coastal dunes

**Tips**
- Plants can absorb undesirable compounds or pollution from the soil
- Many state and county parks have a take only pictures leave only footprints policy
- Ask permission of private landowners if you would like to harvest on their property
- Never consume anything unless you are 100% certain what it is and where it came from
yet so many students lack the fuel to pass their classes due to food insecurity. Food insecurity refers to the lack of access to food due to limited money, which can happen to anyone at any point in time. Without the proper nutrition to fuel their bodies, students’ physical and mental health can suffer, and they can struggle to do well in the efforts they put forth in life. Many communities have their own food pantries for students. Knowing where and how to source food can be a life saver, and can save academic success as well!

Contributor: Samantha LLoyd
The seasons of S. Florida are defined by Water. At this time, water is holding its breath; the swamps and marshes are full of water allowing alligators to move freely. The Cypress are deep green. Sea turtle nests are boiling over and hatchlings are returning to the sea. Swallow Tail Kites are departing. Local residents stay in town spending time with their families as storms roll in. Gardeners are taking advantage of this Tiempo de las Aguas to sow their seeds for wintertime vegetables.

Contributor: Marco Acosta
PAPAYA MILKSHAKE
Papaya milkshake is a delightful and refreshing beverage made by blending ripe papaya fruit with milk and sometimes other ingredients to create a smooth and creamy drink. Here’s a simple recipe for making a papaya milkshake:

Ingredients:

1. Ripe papaya: 1 cup, peeled, deseeded, and cubed
2. Evaporated milk: 1 cup
3. Sugar or honey: To taste (optional, depending on the sweetness of the papaya)
4. Ice cream or yogurt: 1/2 cup (optional, for added creaminess and flavor)
5. Vanilla extract: 1/2 teaspoon (optional, for extra flavor)
6. Ice cubes: A handful
7. Chopped nuts or seeds: For garnishing (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

⇒ Peel and deseed the ripe papaya and cut it into small cubes.
⇒ Place the papaya cubes in a blender.
⇒ Add chilled milk to the blender. You can adjust the amount of milk based on your desired thickness for the milkshake.
⇒ If you want a sweeter milkshake, you can add sugar or honey at this stage.
⇒ If you’re looking for a creamier texture and additional flavor, add a scoop of ice cream or yogurt.
⇒ For extra flavor, you can also add a splash of vanilla extract.
⇒ Drop in a handful of ice cubes to make the milkshake cold and refreshing.
⇒ Blend all the ingredients until smooth and creamy. Make sure there are no papaya chunks left.
⇒ Taste the milkshake and adjust the sweetness or thickness if needed by adding more sugar, milk, or ice cream.
⇒ Once the desired consistency and taste are achieved, stop the blender.
⇒ Pour the papaya milkshake into glasses.
⇒ Garnish with chopped nuts or seeds of your choice, such as almonds, chia seeds, or pumpkin seeds. Serve immediately and enjoy!

Contributor Latoya Merone
**Elderberry Syrup** is an incredible way to use our native Elderberry Fruits to boost your immune system or help your body cope with the cold or flu.

**Prep Time:** 30 minutes  
**Cook Time:** 60 minutes  
**Total Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Contributor:** Corinne Mariposa

**DIRECTIONS**

Only use fully-ripened dark purple berries and remove completely from the stems. Elderberries must be cooked before consuming.

In a pot add 4 Cups of Water and bring to a Boil. Once Boiling add Elderberries and then Ginger and Cinnamon, or whichever spices you like the best. Cloves are also an excellent choice.

Reduce Heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally and slowly reducing the liquids for 45 minutes. After 45 minutes add freshly-squeezed Lemon juice. Stir and continue reducing your syrup for 15 minutes.

Turn-Off Heat and pull the pot away. Let your syrup cool and rest for 20 minutes or until cool enough not to burn you.

After cooling strain the liquid into your mixing bowl using a fine-screened strainer. Using a spoon, lightly press liquid from the leftovers in the strainer into the bowl.

Compost the cooked solids and your Elderberry Syrup is ready to consume! Store in the refrigerator for up to 2-weeks or Freeze in ice cube trays, cover and keep in the freezer for up to 6-months. Take a 1 oz sip daily to boost your immune system or battle a cold. Or Consume 1 frozen ice cube daily in a glass of water.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 2 cups of Native Elderberries  
- 1 Lemon freshly squeezed (fruits fully-removed from the stems)  
- 2 Tablespoons Fresh Grated Ginger  
- 4 Cups of Water  
- 1/2 Teaspoon Cinnamon
Sprouts (all seasons)

Contributor: Olivia Wong

Sprouts are baby veggies. All it takes is clean water for the seeds to start germinating and in just 3 days you have sprouts. After a few more days, they grow and become microgreens. Then after microgreens, they become full grown vegetables.

Sprouts are mighty! They have tons more vitamins, one seed grows one plant so if you eat a handful of broccoli sprouts, it’s like eating many heads of full grown broccoli. You’re getting so many more vitamins.

Since you can grow sprouts indoors, you can have fresh veggies anytime of the year. It doesn’t matter if it’s been raining too much or too little, or if it’s been very hot or very cold. You won’t need pesticides or even soil.
To grow your own sprouts, you need: seeds, jars, strainer and clean water.

1. Add 1 tbsp. of seeds in a large mason jar with a straining lid. Rinse and drain.
2. Fill the jar halfway with clean water and soak seeds for 2 hours.
3. Rinse and drain, leaving the jar angled down at a 45 degree angle.
4. Rinse at least 3x daily for 4 days. You can do it as often as every 4 hours or wait 8 hours. The sprouts like to be moist, but not sitting in water. Each time you rinse, drain it and leave at an angle.
5. At the end of day 4, they should be ready to eat. Rinse again and drain well so they don’t get soggy.

Find recipes and more at www.fulleifresh.com/blog and on Instagram and Facebook @fulleifresh
First Harvest
November - January

Water is percolating into the ground, but is no longer being replaced with rainwater. The streams that connect lakes and wetlands dry up, closing off bodies of water and the animals that live in them.

Wading birds congregate around shrinking bodies of water. Cypress are losing their needles, bringing sunlight into the places that were dark and wet. At sea, the surviving sea turtle hatchlings are foraging in the coral and growing bigger. Birds and humans migrate from the north to spend their winter in the warmth.

Contributor: Marco Acosta
Did you know that there are seven species of native pine trees in Florida, with Slash pine being one of the most recognized in South Florida? Visit your local pine trees and collect some pine cones that have fallen on the ground to make a fun and easy bird feeder.

As you see different birds that visit your feeder, write down all the species that come through your backyard. What kinds of birds do you see the most?

Supplies

- Pine cones - make sure the scales are clean, dry, and open!
- Bird seed mix - black sunflower seeds work best!
- Vegetable shortening like Crisco
- Thread, scissors, and ruler
- Popsicle stick or spatula
- Plate or wax paper

Steps

- Measure a 10-inch long piece of thread and cut the end with a pair of scissors.
- Tie your thread in between the scales of one end of the pine cone to make a loop for your pine cone to hang from.
- Sprinkle some bird seed onto your plate or paper.
- Use a Popsicle stick or spatula and coat the pine cone in shortening. Make sure to get into all the nooks and crannies!
- Dip your coated pine cone in the bird seed and roll the pine cone to make sure all shortening is covered in bird seed.
- Carefully lift your pine cone and hang your pine cone from a branch or a hook on a window! As you observe what birds visit your feeder, you can mix and match different seeds to feed different kinds of birds.
The Banana
—Ericka, Miami student

that is shaped like a phone
that is so bright, it’ll shine the night
that smells like the beautiful sunflower
it has dots, as if it had freckles
it has skin covering the delicious fruit
it is fresh and ripe
the banana is rolling through the city,
looking for a stomach
but it still remains a ripe and lonely banana
Traditional Spring
February - April

The driest season is also warming season. Water levels are low, rain is scarce, and even fire comes to the landscape. Slash pines are toasty in the dry heat. Alligator Flag deep in the cypress dome marks the only water left in the slough. Nature-lovers are looking up, competing to see who will spot the first Swallow Tail Kite in mid-February, though the first sighting is getting earlier every year. Cypress needles burst a bright Spring green. Residents are excited to see the return of nesting sea turtles. The turtles return to the beach where they were born. At the close of the season, migrating birds and people head north for the summer.

Warming but dry • Plant everything!
Grow winter veggies for the world.

Contributor: Marco Acosta
By and large the planting season in South Florida for most garden plants coincides with our dry season fall-spring. There are some plants that can make it through the hot summers, but they need proper care and attention. The good news in South Florida is that you can get multiple crops in and a frost or freeze is very unlikely.

SOUTH FLORIDA

PLANTING CALENDAR

Contributors: Alyssa Vinson and David Outerbridge

By and large the planting season in South Florida for most garden plants coincides with our dry season fall-spring. There are some plants that can make it through the hot summers, but they need proper care and attention. The good news in South Florida is that you can get multiple crops in and a frost or freeze is very unlikely.

JAN
FEB
MAR
JULY
AUG
SEPT
June to August-
Cover crops through the summer heat- Southern and tropical staples- sweet potatoes, pigeon peas, black-eyed peas, okra, callaloo, sun chokes, amaranth

August-October-
Starting to cool off and get a garden planted- eggplant, okra, tomatoes, Seminole pumpkin, squashes, and peppers, early then broccoli, carrots, collards, green beans, lettuce, green onions, peppers, spinach, radishes, and tomatoes

October—January-
cooler weather, dry season, and time to water the garden- fennel, cauliflower, sage, lettuce, parsley, cabbage, carrot, celery, thyme, dill, and cilantro.

January-March-
the promise of spring- potatoes, beets, broccoli, cabbage, collards, kale, mustard, chard, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, and turnips.

March-June-
getting ready for the heat- Pigeon peas, black-eyed peas, okra, sweet potatoes, summer greens such as amaranth, longevity spinach and Malabar spinach.

July-
Plant to savor in the fall: Pumpkins!
Nature Journaling
By: Elaine Fiore & Autumn Kioti

Nature journaling is a wonderful way to connect with the natural world around you and can be done in a garden, food forest or any natural space. Below are 3 ways you could get started:

A. Observe a small area quietly for 10 minutes. You may use a circle of yarn or hula hoop to define the area by placing it on the ground and observing within the boundaries of the item.

B. Find three things you consider the same type to observe, for example: three different leaves, flowers, pods, fruit, stems, berries, vines, shrubs, trees, or herbs.

C. Choose one plant. Zoom in on three different parts (use a magnifying glass if you have one).
1. Record:

- location
- day & date
- time
- temperature with a brief description of the weather (i.e. gray clouds, sunny and hot)

2. Sketch what you observe.

3. For each sketch, answer the following prompts:

- I observe....
- Something you are seeing with your eyes right now and not a conclusion as to what might have happened or be happening.
- I wonder if...because I noticed.....
- Posit your conclusions as to what might be happening.
- It reminds me of....
- What surprised you....

Get creative! The journal doesn’t have to make sense to anyone but you! It can be a poem, a dream, a silly saying...
May-July
Agua Regresa y Calor (Return of the Rain + Heat)

The rains return. Even the air is thick with water. We retreat indoors for afternoon storms. Water levels are rising, bringing back the paths of water that lead from one lake to the next, from wetland to cypress dome. Animal residents are on the move. Only the year-round residents are left. Cypress needles darken a deep green. Protected sea turtle nests dot the beach.

Contributor: Marco Acosta
Make Your Own Tropical Fruit Snacks

**EQUIPMENT:**
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board
- Dehydrator (an air fryer or regular oven set to the lowest temperature will work).
- Cookie sheet and rack
- Airtight container

**TROPICAL FRUITS TO TRY (AND HOW TO PREPARE THEM):**
- Mangoes: Peel and cut fruit away from pit. Slice.
- Sapodillas (nispero or chikoo): Cut ripe fruit in half and remove seeds. Scoop out with a spoon and slice.
- Bananas: Peel, slice.
- Pineapple: Remove top and cut away peel. Cut into lengthwise quarters. Remove core and slice.
- Starfruit (carambola): Wash and slice.
- Dragonfruit (pitaya): Remove peel. Slice into rounds.
- Mamey sapote: Cut ripe fruit in half lengthwise. Remove seeds. Slice.

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Slice fruits the same thickness – about 1/3 of an inch thick. Place on dehydrator racks without stacking or touching. Dehydrate until fruits are leathery and not sticky. This might take 6-18 hours. Let fruit cool before storing airtight. Keep your dried fruit snacks away from heat and moisture. Enjoy your dried snacks!
You might mistake it for a terrible, wild growing weed, but bitter melon has many benefits! The vine is said to be native to India, but it is now found all around the world. This plant thrives in warm weather and can grow year-round in Florida and other lands with enough rainfall. From the leaf to the bulb, the vine is used in many cultures and is known by many names.

Here are some of its benefits:
Keep the blood ‘clean’ during pregnancy
Prevent/remove blood clots.
Regulate high blood pressure.
Reduces fever and other cold symptoms.

Haitians, like myself, uses this plant as a medicine, drink, food, in soap, and other body products.

**Bitter Melon Cold Processed Soap**

**Ingredients:**
- Coconut oil
- Castor oil
- Almond oil
- Various Essential oils: Mint, rose, and thyme (or any of your choice)
- Blended bulb (at its greener state) and leaf
- Menthol Crystals
- Lye mixture (only use if an adult is present)
- Soap powder (bought or naturally made)
Bitter Melon Tea

I had some of the worst acne EVER! I used several products on my face, Pro-active, Acne Gone, Bump Begone and more, which never worked and irritated my skin! My mom would always make teas that I would call ‘Nas-Teas’ (Nastys). One time she pulled out the bitter melon that was growing all over our fence in the backyard. She boiled it, put it in a teacup and said, “Drink.”

It smelled awful and I immediately said, “No.” “Drink this for your face,” she said.

I mustered up the strength and I drank it.

She gave me the rest of the tea to wash my face. For the next two weeks, I drank the bitter melon tea three times a week and washed my face every morning and night with the tea. My face totally cleared up. Till this day my face stays clear of acne!

How to prepare Bitter Melon Tea
(only drink, max. once a day 3 times a week)
Bring a pot (of your size choice) of water to a boil.
Let the water boil for about 20 mins
Wash and add the leaves
(be sure not to put in the bulb)
Let leave steep or boil on low temperature for about 5-10 mins.
Add salt to your liking (optional)
Pour into a teacup and enjoy
Meet Lemongrass, a plant of many names and countless stories. Its journey from the lush, vibrant landscapes of Maritime Southeast Asia to distant shores has shaped its rich cultural significance.

In my family, Lemongrass holds a special place in our hearts. With roots deeply embedded in the South, specifically Georgia, we discovered this remarkable plant when we made the transition to the tropical haven of South Florida. Here, amidst a vibrant Caribbean community, Lemongrass found its new home.

Lemongrass, also known as fever grass or tanglad, is formally known as Cymbopogon citratus. Its distinct lemony fragrance not only graces our culinary delights but also serves as a natural remedy. Passed down through generations, we’ve used Lemongrass to brew soothing teas that help battle colds and fevers. It’s also our trusted natural pest repellent, safeguarding our precious family garden.

But our story is just one thread in the colorful tapestry of Lemongrass’s history. From the Philippines to the Caribbean and beyond, this plant has woven its way into the hearts and traditions of diverse cultures. Its fragrant leaves infuse dishes with a burst of flavor, while its medicinal prowess tackles a range of ailments, from fevers to digestive issues.

So, whether you call it Lemongrass, fever grass, or tanglad, one thing remains clear—this remarkable plant bridges cultures, flavors, and remedies, uniting us all in appreciation of its versatile and cherished role in our lives.

“Cymbopogon citratus”
By Adrian Carter
Adrian Carter:
spent her entire life in a subtropical growing climate and is a dedicated member of the STEM and Computer Science Departments in Broward County Public Schools. As a former horticulture therapy teacher with a master’s degree in landscape architecture, Adrian understands plants and their connection with our developed world. Her role in Broward Education Foundation’s Garden Delights paved the way for Broward TEA School Food Forest. Now she supports schools across the district in establishing their own technology empowered school food forests.

Elaine Fiore:
inspires action toward a sustainable food system by recognizing the sacredness of food, a love for growing food, the importance of access to healthy foods, and the environmental benefit of school food forests. She piloted a cafeteria food-share recovery program for Broward County Public Schools and to spearhead Food Waste Prevention Week collaborates with national organizations.

Lupita Vasquez:
grew up in Immokalee, Florida, daughter of immigrant farmworkers active in the early days of immigrant farm labor movements in SW Florida. She has served in the military and held positions in education, medical and community outreach fields. Her upbringing was wrought with blatant injustices, from the fields in which her parents toiled to unjust systems that maintained the status quo, including inadequate access to health-care, housing inequality, lowered standards in education, underrepresentation in government, and little to no access to healthy and affordable food systems.
Marco Acosta:
Marco Acosta is an accomplished professional in sustainable agriculture and landscaping. As the Food Forest Manager at Florida Gulf Coast University, he wields a Masters Degree in Agribusiness. Marco's fervor for sustainability, agriculture, and permaculture is woven into his work, emphasizing a keen awareness of the economic and social impacts within our food system. A seasoned expert and leader, Marco addresses the environmental impact of landscaping practices.

Heather Skaza Acosta:
is the Director of the Whitaker Center for STEM Education at Florida Gulf Coast University. She works tirelessly to promote environmental education and research efforts within the Southwest Florida community.

Olivia Wong:
In school I was the different kid because my dad was an indoor farmer and we are Chinese, Cuban and American. People did not understand what he did even when I explained that he grew vegetables inside a building. When they asked what kind, I said “sprouts,” and they were even more confused. Daily, we ate lots of veggies at home. Veggies are the stuff of life, especially sprouts.
About the Author

Gretchen Schmidt:
is the editor of Edible South Florida, a quarterly magazine and website that explores the foods, stories, and community by season. Since 2010, Edible South Florida has covered what grows here, farmers markets, restaurants, and the people who work hard to bring food to our tables.

Corinne Mariposa:
is the Director and Founder of Miami Seed Share, a non-profit growing resource that provides Miami with free educational workshops, prolific guerrilla gardens, and the South Florida’s Public Seed Collection. Corinne is an activist for Ecological, Transgender and Food Justice.

David Outerbridge:
the UF/IFAS Extension for Lee County, is a Bermudian transplant to Southwest Florida who supports community and food production through research and education.

Gracious Davenport:
a former Broward County Food Forest teacher, fellow with ASU Sustainability Teachers’ Academies, and Deerfield Beach Middle School 2023 Caliber Awards Teacher of the Year Nominee, Gracious played a large role in bringing the School Gardener’s Almanac to South Florida as her story and work with students inspired organizers to find more out more about people and plants in South Florida.
About the Author

Mary Benton:
is an artist who saw an urgent need to open people’s eyes to the beauty and importance of the natural world that sustains us. She founded Bound by Beauty, a non-profit that transforms neighbors into nurturers of nature by fighting climate change with Butterfly Circles; sanctuaries for native flora and fauna that provide food for butterfly caterpillars and many species of pollinators. These important native wild plants are found all over South Florida, connecting students with nature both at school and in their neighborhoods.

Alyssa Vinson
is an avid lover of all things outdoors, spending her time in gardens, on trails and in the water. She has been an environmental science educator for the past 15 years working in Alaska, Oregon and now Florida.

Tatiana Castro
is a Miami native and environmental educator to learners of all ages. She loves to share her enthusiasm for how plants and people live on Earth together.

Lisette Morales McCabe
is a Nicaraguan-born artist and photographer. She centers her creativity around documenting the natural beauty of South Florida. Simultaneously, she explores the intricate connections between land, identity, food cultivation, storytelling, and perspectives from local communities.
About the Author

Amelia Botello
migrated in the 1980s from Lagunillas, San Luis Potosi, Mexico to the small, agricultural town of (what is now) Arcadia, Florida. Amelia keeps her Mexican roots close by growing fresh and organic chiles, herbs, and produce. She loves caring for her flowers and plants.

Ariana Avila
Amelia raised Ariana Avila and her siblings in Arcadia where the Latine population is significant. With migration, they brought their culture, and most importantly, their food. Ariana Avila aspires to carry on her family’s cultural food legacy and to care for plants as much as her mom one day.

Autumn Kioti
is an artist, Florida Master Naturalist, environmental educator, and performer. They explore issues of environmental and social justice using the natural world as an inspiration and guide. As an artist and a facilitator of arts-based science education programs, it is their wildest hope to bring awareness to environmental issues, foster the understanding that humans are not separate from nature, and to create a little magic and silliness along the way. Much of their work is volunteer-driven, grassrooted, self-funded, and engages a broad and diverse public.
About the Author

O’Miami  Caroline Cabrera

Poetry in the Pitayas - O, Miami builds community around the power of poetry. Through collaborations, projects, events, and publications, we create a platform for amplifying Miamians, investing in a new shared narrative of our city and a more equitable picture of its future.

Ty Boyd

is a distinguished Permaculturalist and horticultural expert, cultivating knowledge as a grower at Shangri La Springs. With a robust background as a seasoned agriculturalist, Ty excels in Florida landscaping, innovative food forest design, and creating vibrant edible gardens. Holding a BA in integrated studies from Florida Gulf Coast University, Ty’s expertise is rooted in a holistic approach to sustainable agriculture.

Zuwania Smith

grew up in a traditional African American-inspired with a touch of Caribbean flavor household, where much of my cultural foods are called “Soul Food”. Soul food is basically, down-home cooking with its roots in the rural South. We ate many variations of veggies, pork, and fried cornbreads made out of cornmeal and lard. When many of my family members were diagnosed with high blood pressure, diabetes, and kidney failure I began to change my eating habits. I began transitioning to a pescatarian lifestyle, which included a more plant-based diet that included whole wheat pasta, bread, and lots of veggies.

Latoya D. Merone

is a chef and culinary teacher who is in love food and family. Also known as, Chef Lady, she is the child of Haitian immigrants who connected her with the flavors, ingredients, and traditions that she loves so much.
About the Artists

Rei Ramirez

is a Cuban-born artist based in North Miami, FL. His love and propensity for art is rooted in a childhood prolific with animal doodles. Though Rei holds a degree in Graphic Design and dabbled in a few art courses, he is largely self-taught and learned to create through experimentation and self-expression. Rei credits the concrete landscape ensconced within the area's urban wetlands as his primary inspiration. Rei is a full-time visual and graphic artist with his company Rei Ramirez Art and Urban Organikz. A passionate environmental advocate. Going forward, Rei hopes to explore using innovative ideas, art and technology as a model to lessen the impact of the ecological footprint we put on the world.

IG: @Urbanorganikz

Victor Giraldo

has been drawing for as long as he can remember, but inspiration struck him the day he saw his Mom doodle the character “Pokey” from the show “Gumbi”. After that, he spent a lot of time at the dinner table surrounded by scattered papers. With the support of his high school art teacher Mrs. Campbell, he was accepted into a collegiate arts program. Even though it was difficult to balance work, school, and being a young parent, Victor earned a Bachelor’s degree in Graphic Design from the University of Florida and is currently freelancing as a creative service provider specializing in murals, illustrations, graphic design and digital illustrations.

IG: @vic_the_viper
Thank you to State Farm
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