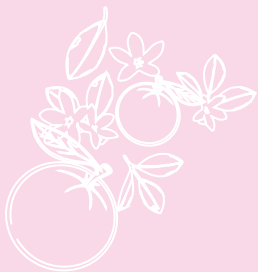


SOUTH
FLORIDA



**SCHOOL
GARDENER'S
ALMANAC**

**20
24**





Published by University of Arizona School Garden Workshop in partnership with Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation and ASU Sustainable Teacher's Academy

With gratitude for the South Florida organizers



FOREWORD

In South Florida, magical spaces emerge where plants, animals, and people work together in their environment. These spaces can provide us with food, medicine, a safe place to call home, and a way to express ourselves. They are a source of local pride and complex memories. At times we celebrate in them, and at times we go there to reflect. While these spaces are beautiful and connect us to nature, they can also remind us of changes and challenges in the world. School gardens are some of these magical spaces. In South Florida, the heat and rain combine to create the perfect subtropical climate for growing food and community.

Water brings life as it travels through the rivers, lakes, and beaches of the Everglades watershed. South Florida is a biodiversity hotspot with nine distinct ecosystems. It is also a provider of food to people across the nation. As inhabitants of this beautiful and vulnerable land, it is our responsibility to take care of it. By working with plants and animals to build magical spaces such as school gardens, we can protect the land and our community. The plants we use for medicine, food, and everyday products tell a story about who we are and where we came from. They are a tool for sharing our stories, our cultures, and ourselves. By uniting us across our differences, our relationship to the land connects us in community.

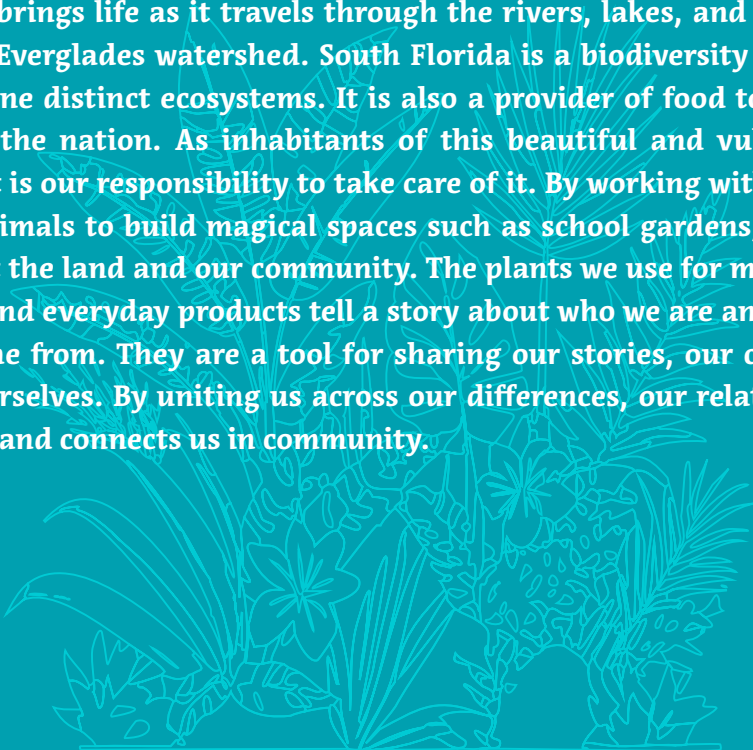


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SEASONS CALENDAR

Traditional Spring

**February -
April**

Return of Water & Meat

May - July

**November -
January**

First Harvest

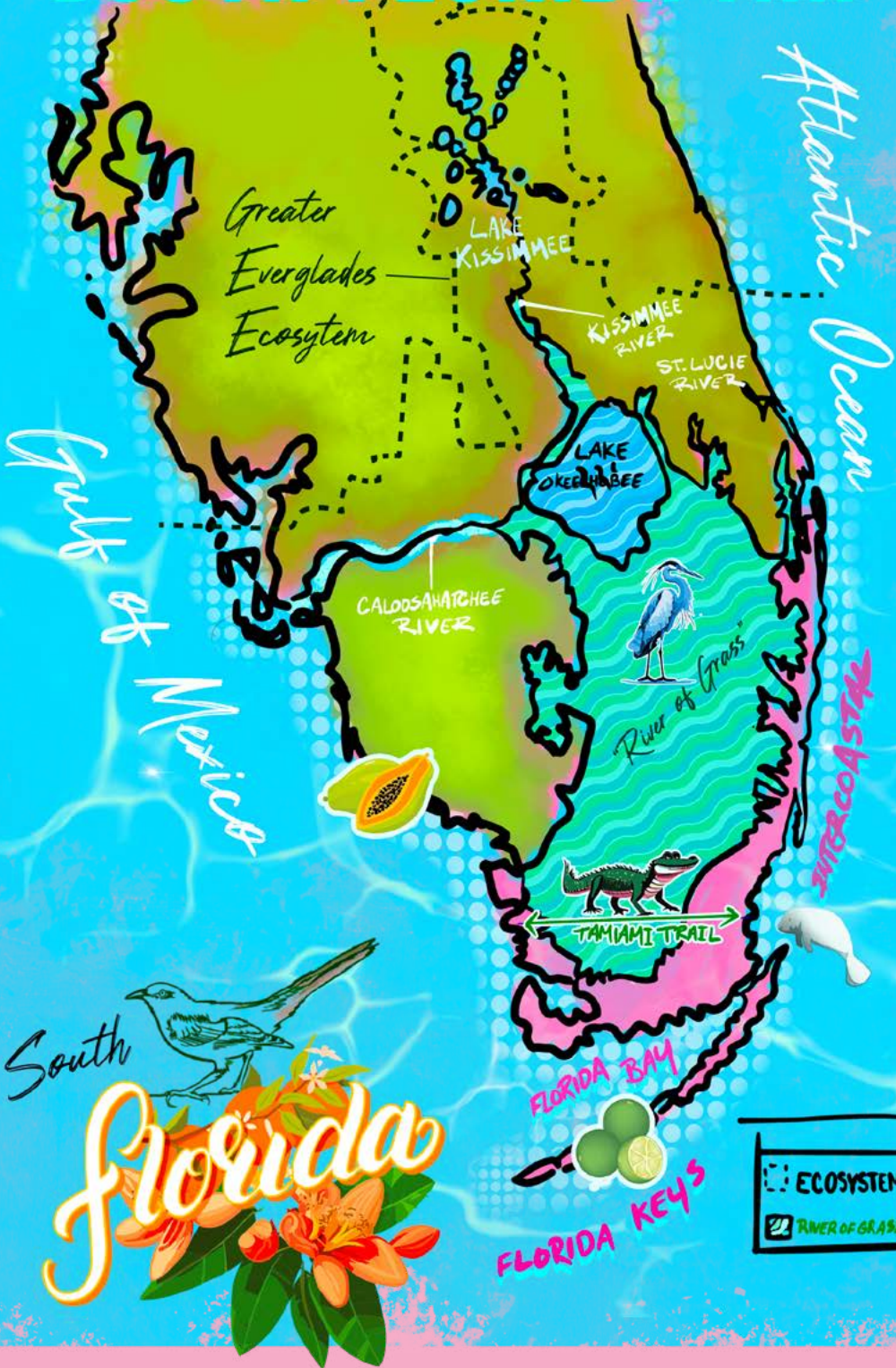
**August - early
October**

Time of Water





SOUTH FLORIDA MAP



A Call to Prayer, History Past and Present, and Hope for the Future

By, Lupita Vazquez Reyes and Lisette Morales Mccabe



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, the Mayaimi (Belle Glade Culture) and Tequesta were hunter-gatherers lived off the natural landscape and coastal waters. On the Southwest Coast, the Calusa, the fierce warriors against the incoming Spanish, lived and navigated the Gulf coastal waterways, building large community systems. Further South, the Florida Keys' tribes known as the Matecumbe, also lived off the warm waterways and island wildlife. Within 200 years of European contact, South Florida tribes were gone, erased from their land due to outsider disease, warfare, and slavery. By the 18th century, groups of creek 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 remember 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 rights, yet show us today their will to keep sacred traditions and culture alive for their community. We are called to focus 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 land.***

We pray for nurturing the soil that it may grow food to eat today, and revitalize the land to sustain future seeds, and people.

We acknowledge those who plant, harvest, and care for the natural spaces.

***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.***



WILD HARVEST CALENDAR

By, David Outerbridge UF/IFAS

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-September Oak Hammock

Oyster Mushrooms *March - July*
Oak hammock or pine flat woods

Indigo milk cap *July-September*
Oak hammock

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

FLOWERS

Spanish Bayonette *July-August*
Coastal

Nasturtium *November -March*
Open areas

Perennial Peanut *April-September*
Open areas

Coral Honeysuckle *April-September*

Wild Violets *November to March*

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- September*
Uplands

Cocoplum *July-September*
Coastal dunes

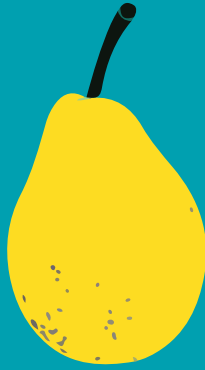
Tips-

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



Food is fuel

By, Samantha LLOYD

Food Is Fuel, yet many young people experience an unfair lack of access to food. Food insecurity can happen to anyone at any point in time for many different reasons. When we don't have enough food to fuel our bodies, we might struggle to concentrate or feel happy. If you ever feel this way, you can talk to a trusted adult at school and ask for help. You can also use this

list of food pantries found here:

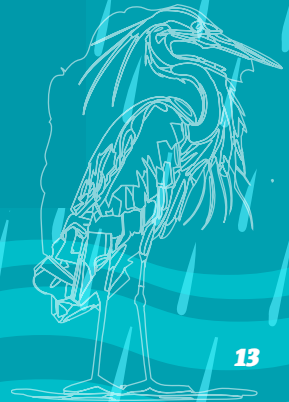
feedingsouthflorida.org

Time of Water

August - Early October

The seasons of South 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.

By, 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!

By, Laytoya 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



By, 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

By, Olivia Wong

Sprouts are baby veggies. All it takes is clean water for the seeds to start germinating and in just 4 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

By, Marco Acosta

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.

Pine Cone Bird Feeders

By, Tatiana Castro

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

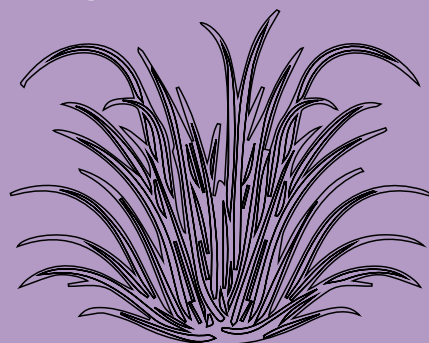
- Pine cones - make sure the scales are clean, dry, and open!
- Bird seed mix - black sunflower seeds work best!
- Vegetable shortening like Crisco
- Thread, scissors, and ruler
- Popsicle stick or spatula
- Plate or wax paper

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.



SAME PLANT



DIFFERENT NAME



Cymbopogon Citratus

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.

By, Adrian Carter

CYMBOPOGON CITRATUS



LOCATION



COMMON NAME



USE

Caribbean

Fever Grass

reduce fever

Phillipines

Tanglad.
Elephant grass

traditionally
used in cooking

Indonesia

Sereh.

fragrant leaves
are used for
cooking

Portugal

Chá de Príncipe

making tea

Germany

Zitronengras

lemongrass oil

Vietnam

xà

marinades

Spanish speaking
countries

Zacate limón

culinary herb

India

Dhutara

a variety of
medical issues

Chiles Pequines en Vinagre

Ingredients

- 1 cup of chile pequines
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 peeled ½ inch-wide carrot pieces
- ½ of a white onion, thin slices
- 10 cloves
- 20 whole black pepper
- 7 whole garlic cloves
- 2 sprigs of fresh oregano
- Salt
- ½ teaspoon olive oil
- 1 32-48 oz dry jar
- 5 bay leaves

Contributors Amelia Botella and Ariana Avila

Add a pinch of salt and soak the chiles in water.

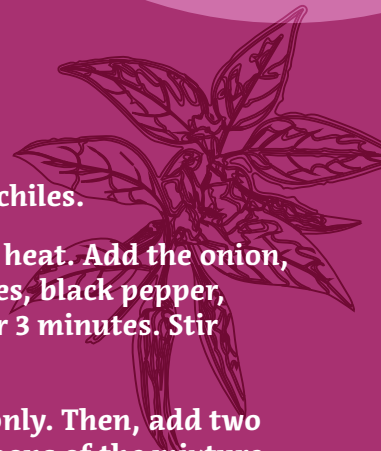
Do not cover and let sit in a cool area for 2 days.

On day three, throw out the water and rinse the chiles.

Add ½ teaspoon of olive oil to a large pan on low heat. Add the onion, carrots, oregano sprigs, cloves, whole garlic cloves, black pepper, and bay leaves and allow them to sit in the oil for 3 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Grab your jar and add the first layer of carrots, only. Then, add two tablespoons of the chiles. Next, add two tablespoons of the mixture. Add another layer of the chiles. Continue until your jar is almost full.

Slowly pour the apple cider vinegar and a pinch of salt and dry or fresh oregano. Seal the jar and leave in a dry, cool area for at least 10 days.





Poetry in the Plantains
by, O'Miami

The Banana

—Ericka, Miami student

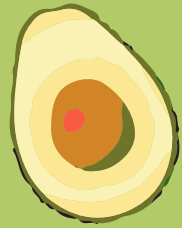
that is shaped like a phone
that is so bright, it'll shine the night
that smells like the beautiful sunflower
it has dots, as if it had freckles
it has skin covering the delicious fruit
it is fresh and ripe
the banana is rolling through the city,
looking for a stomach
but it still remains a ripe and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

Ericka 23

Explore fruits, plants and vegetables available in your food forest or garden

Examine the fruit with all five senses:

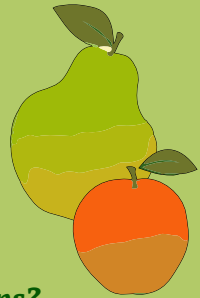
1. Observe its appearance.
2. Pick it up to feel its weight and texture.
3. Gently shake or tap to hear any sounds.
4. Smell any aromas.
5. Taste the fruit.



Take notes about your observations

What does the fruit remind you of?

Does it look like something you've seen before?



Read the banana poem aloud

- ❖ Which details from the poem caught your attention?
- ❖ Which senses did the poet engage with their descriptions?
- ❖ Notice how the sensory details helped the writer to create vivid and interesting descriptions

Choose one of the fruits you learned about.

- ❖ Write a poem that uses all the senses to describe your fruit.
- ❖ Use your imagination to compare the fruit to something else or to personify it.
- ❖ Reread your poem for any senses they forgot OR if there are places where you can add more vivid details descriptions.

Contributor: O'Miami's Caroline Cabrera

WHIDDON VEGAN PASTA

By, Zuwania Smith

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp avocado oil
- 1 Red bell pepper
- 1 Small onion
- 2 Cups bella mushroom
- 1 Small eggplant
- 1-2 Cups cherry tomato
- 16oz bowtie pasta
- 3 Garlic cloves minced
- 1-Pint plant base heavy cream,
- 1 Cup plant-based mozzarella cheese

Instructions:

1. Preheat a deep skillet with avocado oil over medium heat and add diced veggies. Sauté until they soften. Set aside.
2. Cook the pasta in a boiling pot of hot, salted water for about 2 minutes less than the box instructions. Drain pasta saving half a cup of pasta water.
3. In the same skillet the veggies were cooked in, add heavy cream and minced garlic over medium heat. Allow the cream to come to a simmer. Add cheese, stirring occasionally till cheese is fully melted.
4. Add in cooked pasta and reserved pasta water to the cream mixture. Fold in pasta till fully coated.
5. Add in your cooked veggies, salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately... ENJOY!







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.**

By, Marco Acosta

GRAFTING AND AIR LAYERING

By, Alyssa Vinson

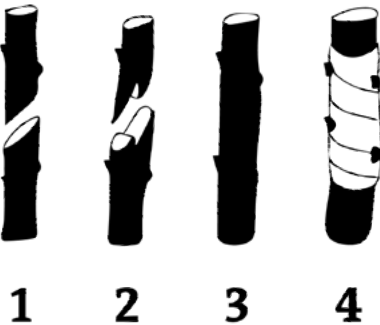
If you have fruit trees or vines in the garden that you love, a wonderful way of preserving and continuing the genetics of these plants is to propagate them using grafting or air layering. These two techniques need some practice but if done in the right way, at the right time can help you have many genetic twins of the plants and fruits you love.

When to graft? Mangos are best in spring, March-May. Avocados are best October-December. For most other fruit trees there is some variation, but spring is often a suitable time as it allows for the graft to catch and grow through the summer months.

When to Air Layer? Air layering can be done throughout the growing season if they stay moist enough. Good candidates for air layering: blackberries, grapes, and other edible vines. Blueberries are best air layered in the spring after fruiting.

Grafting can include; bud grafting and t grafting which need to be done in the spring when the bark is 'slipping'. Good candidates for grafting include most varieties of fruit trees including citrus.

GRAFTING



AIR LAYERING





SOUTH FLORIDA

PLANTING CALENDAR

By, 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-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, 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!



APR



MAY



JUNE



OCT



NOV



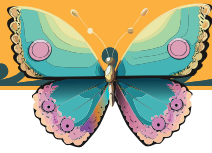
DEC

Native Pollinator Circles

By, Mary Benton



Did you know that Florida has over 300 species of native bees? We can both benefit from and help these important pollinators by creating habitats for them near native plants, vegetable gardens, and food forests.



CREATING A 6' MANICURED BUTTERFLY CIRCLE

Step 1: Pick a sunny site for your butterfly circle.

Step 2: Pound pole in center of future circle and use string to measure radius, marking the circumference with powdered chalk or lawn flags placed every foot or so.

Step 3: Using hoe or other gardening tool, remove grass and weeds (compost when dry) from area within the circle. Use the rake to smooth the soil.

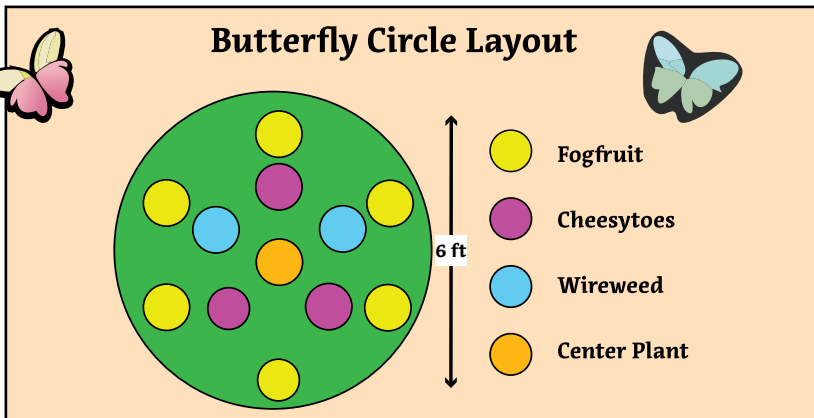
Step 4: Cover the circle with a layer of thick newspaper, wet it with a hose, then add mulch to cover.

Step 5: You can place rocks or stones around the circle if you'd like a protective border.

Step 6: Let sit for a minimum of 3-4 weeks, watering as needed.

Materials:

- ▷ -old newspapers
- ▷ -3-4 bags of mulch (2 cubic feet)
- ▷ -pole to mark the center (minimum 1 ft tall)
- ▷ -3 foot long string
- ▷ -powdered chalk or lawn flags
- ▷ -hoe or shovel and rake
- ▷ -some friends or helpers! (optional but recommended)





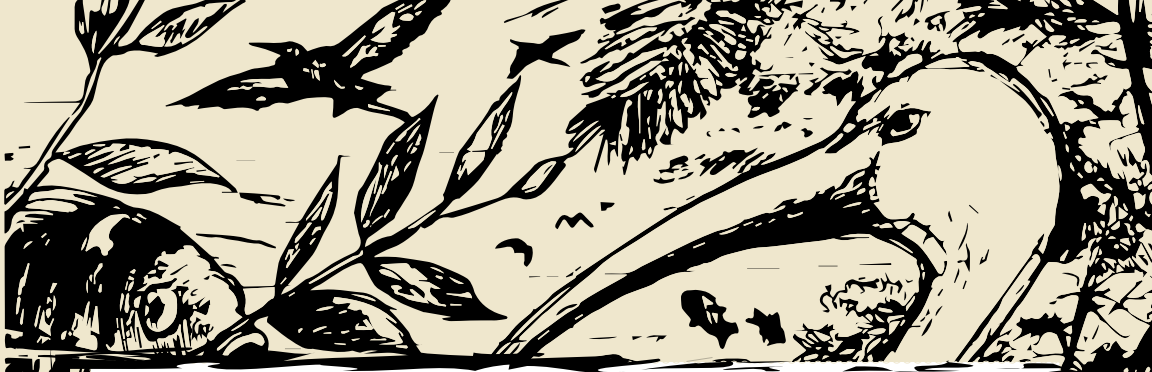
Nature Journaling

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.....
- ▷ Hypothesize 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...

Return of the Rain and Heat

May-July

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.

By, Marco Acosta



DRY ME, TRY ME:

Make Your Own Tropical Fruit Snacks

By, Gretchen Schmidt

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!



The Bittersweet Vine: **Bitter Melon** (*Momordica charantia*)

By, Gracious Davenport

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, use 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.



Traditional Mound Gardens

By, Ty Boyd



Traditional Mound Gardens gather native organisms, reuse organic matter, and keeps in moisture. These native organisms include bacteria, fungi, and protozoa that have been here for a long time.

To make a Traditional Mound Garden:

- Lay a base of leaves and branches.
- Make walls with logs to make it easier to separate each mound and have a lot of mound space to plant.
- Put compost/soil on top of the logs super high creating the mound itself.



All of this organic matter decomposes and is layered. Irrigating between mounds conserves water but decaying matter also does. The old matter acts as a sponge soaking up the water from irrigation and rainwater, then leaks back into the mound for crops. "Plants can't thrive if soil ain't alive!"

About the Authors



Adrian Carter:

Adrian 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:

Elaine 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 Vazquez Reyes:

Lupita 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 healthcare, housing inequality, lowered standards in education, underrepresentation in government, and little to no access to healthy and affordable food systems.

About the Authors



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:

Heather 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:

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



Samantha Lloyd:

Samantha became the Coordinator of the FGCU Campus Food Pantry in 2016. She graduated in 2017 after experiencing food insecurity throughout her undergrad, having only \$50 for food and gas every three weeks for many months. Samantha utilized the FGCU Campus Food Pantry every week for three years, and is more than happy to keep the resource going for the hundreds of students that continue to use it every semester!

About the Authors



Gretchen Schmidt:

Gretchen 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:

Corinne 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:

David is with 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:

Gracious is a certified Science Teacher, STEM coordinator and part of the wonderful T.E.A. Garden/Food Forest project in Broward County School District at Deerfield Beach Middle School. She also contributes to the school's Flipany 's Sustainability/Health group. "I am American with Haitian background and trained in the Haitian cultures and practices as well. I have a love for all forms of life; plant life, animal life and even microbial life. I enjoy exploring the different forms of life and connecting them to one another and understanding the many ways they mutually work together to help maintain balance on Earth."

About the Authors

Mary Benton:



Mary 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



Alyssa 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



Tatiana 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. [@teachingsbytatiana](#)

Lisette Morales Mccabe



Lisette 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 Authors

Amelia Botello



Amelia 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



Autumn 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, grassroots, self-funded, and engages a broad and diverse public.

About the Authors



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

Ty 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

Zuwania 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

Latoya 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

Rei is a Cuban-born artist based in North Miami, Florida. His love for art and the natural environment is rooted in a childhood filled with animal doodles. Though Rei holds a degree in Graphic Design, he is largely a 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, graphic artist and muralist 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 humans put on the world.

IG: @Urbanorganikz



Victor Giraldo

Victor 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





Illustration by: Victor Giraldo











ASU College of
Global Futures
Arizona State University

**Rob and Melani Walton
Sustainability Teachers' Academy**



Rei Ramirez
Art



 THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
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