

Foraging Florida: Plant List

Wonderful Weeds:

Beggarsticks / Spanish Needles (*Bidens alba*) - F
Wireweed (*Sida sp. Sida rhombifolia, S. cordifolia*) - FL, M
Plantain (*Plantago major, P. virginica*)* - F, M
Tropical Chickweed (*Drymaria cordata*)* - F, M

These species are incredibly common in most SW Florida yards. They usually are considered to be weeds or nuisance plants and grow year round and can easily be harvested for use in medicine making or for food.

Hammock & Upland Plants:

Bacopa (*Bacon moneri*)* - M
Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) - M
Blackberry / Dewberry (*Rubus sp.*) - FF, M
Cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*) - FF, M
Elder (*Sambucus nigra sub canadensis*)* - FL, M
Firebush (*Hamelia patens*) - M
Goldenrod (*Solidago sp.*) - M
Gotu Kola (*Centella asiatica*)* - F, M
Grapes (*Vitis sp.*) - F, M
Ground Cherry (*Physalis sp.*) - FF, M
Lyreleaf Sage (*Salvia lyrata*), - M*
Passionflower / Maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*) - M
Poke (*Phytolacca americana*) - M
Prickly Pear (*Opuntia sp.*) - FF, M
Smilax / Greenbriar (*Smilax sp.*) - F, M
Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) - M
Usnea (*Usnea sp.*) - M
Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) - M
Wild Coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*) - F*, M

Plants that typically like higher elevations, such as hardwood oak hammock or longleaf pine forest. Soil quality can vary...hammock is typically a bit wetter than pine flatwoods. However, the longleaf pine flatwoods can have ephemeral (non permanent) wetlands and you may be able to find wetland plants in unexpected places. Flatwoods and internal state uplands generally tend to have sandier, dryer soil. While oak and coastal hammocks tend to have soil that is more moist and nutrient rich.

Coastal and Beach Plants:

Blue Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*) - FL, M
Cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*) - FF, M
Glasswort (*Salicornia sp.*) - FL, M
Gumbo Limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) - M
Saltbush / Groundsel Tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*) - M
Sea Grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) - FF, M
Sea Purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*) - FL, M
Seaside Goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*) - M

These plants are native to the SW FL coastal area and often can be found growing wild along the sea or Bay areas. They grow in a range of coastal areas, from the saltern at the water's edge to the dunes higher up the shore. Some also may be growing in the coastal strand and coastal maritime forest areas, a little farther inland than the beach proper.

Symbol Key

* One Star indicates that this plant likes to grow in wetter areas

F: Food Use - safe to consume lots FF: Food - Fruit FL: Food - use in limited quantities

M: Medicinal Use - if not marked as food, use careful consideration and care in use

Created by Misha Nell * Copyright 2021 - 2022

serpentskissherbals@gmail.com * FB: Misha Cain Nell * Insta @mishakitty78 * serpents_kiss_herbals
Cypress Pillar Healing Arts * www.cypresspillar.com * FB: Cypress Pillar Healing Arts

This handout may not be copied, distributed or shared without written permission

Foraging Florida: Plant Actions

Plant Actions:

Cold & Flu:

- Beautyberry (cough with wetness)
- Blue Porterweed (cold and flu with nervous anxiety)
- Bidens (amazing for coughs, antibiotic, best fresh)
- Elder (flowers help drain heat and lower fever, berries when cooked help boost immunity)
- Goldenrod (allergies, post nasal drip, scratchy throat)
- Lyreleaf Sage (cold and flu)
- Saltbush (clears bacterial and viral infections, cold, pneumonia, chills and flu)
- Sida (bronchial dilator, contains ephedrine in root - use with care)

Soothing Herbs for Stress and Brain Boosters:

- Bacopa (best used earlier in the day - before noon, helps with concentration and focus, neuroprotective, can help rebuild brain after stroke or trauma)
- Blue Porterweed (helps with anxiety and unsettled mind)
- Gotu Kola (helps memory and cognitive function, promotes peaceful mind, adaptogen)
- Passionflower (helps quiet the mind, amazing for circular thinking or over thinking)

Respiratory:

- Bidens (the cough that will not leave)
- Goldenrod (allergies, sinus infections)
- Lyreleaf Sage (lung cancer, moistens lungs)
- Plantain (lung tonic, moistening demulcent)
- Saltbush (respiratory tonic)
- Sida
- Wax Myrtle (chronic rhinitis)
- Usnea (bronchitis, pneumonia, strep)

Edible Plant Parts:

Food / Edible as Fruit:

- Sea Grape (ripe fruit)
- Cocoplum (ripe fruit)
- Blackberry / Dewberry (ripe fruit)
- Grapes (ripe fruit)
- Prickly Pear (the fruit, cleaned of spines)
- Ground Cherry (ripe fruit)
- Elder (the fruit can be used in desserts but must be cooked and garbled carefully)

Nourishing Herbs / Food/ High in Vitamins and Minerals / Great to

Throw into Cooking:

- Plantain (raw or cooked)
- Bidens (raw or cooked)
- Gotu Kola (raw or cooked)
- Smilax (fresh green tips)
- Grape (leaves)
- Glasswort (salty; great raw in a salad too!)
- Spanish Moss (famine food - eat growing tips)
- Sea Purslane (salty; great raw in a salad too!)
- Prickly Pear (scrape pads of spines and cook - called nopales)

Foraging Florida: Plant Actions

Plant Actions:

Skin Savers / Bites & Stings:

- Bidens (spit poultice for bites, stings)
- Plantain (knits skin back together / natural bandage, draws out poisons and toxins)
- Goldenrod (allergic reactions, skin eruptions)
- Gotu Kola (helps repair damaged tissue especially connective tissue)
- Prickly Pear (amazing for burns, cools skin and soothes burned tissue)
- Beautyberry (use as bug repellent, can help repel mosquitoes and ticks, root decoction to help with itchy skin)
- Spanish Moss (pack wounds / natural bandage)
- Firebush (boil leaves and apply once cooled to sores, rashes, wounds)
- Sea Grape (rashes and skin eruptions - wash of the leaves)
- Sea Purslane (decoction for venomous fish stings)
- Gumbo Limbo (bark for poison ivy, other skin rashes, sunburn)
- Smilax (inflamed skin issues, drains heat from skin eruptions)

Fevers:

Generally considered helpful for lowering fevers - usually in the form of an infusion

- Elderflower
- Firebush
- Lyreleaf Sage (diaphoretic)
- Saltbush
- Beautyberry (used in sweat lodge as a steam, especially for malaria)

Common & Accessible Types of Medicinal Preparations:

Decoction: a strong "tea" (note - it's not truly tea as it does not have the tea plant in it, but the idea is the same) boiled for a long time; usually 10-15 minutes or more up to 45 minutes; water is intentionally decreased by 1/2 to 2/3

Compress: Pad of material that has been soaked in medicine and applied to skin

Food: food is medicine; simply eat it

Infusion: Like making a "tea"; plant matter is infused into water; usually steeped in boiling water, covered, for 5-7 minutes; different plant parts take more or less time (ie flowers usually take much less time than leaves); infusion is specific to aerial parts of the plant

Poultice: Ground up or mashed material applied directly to the skin

Wash: Typically made as an infusion, then applied to skin via a compress or bath

Foraging Florida: Plant Actions

Plant Actions Continued:

Immunity:

- Elder (cooked berries)
- Usnea
- Salicornia (high in vitamins & minerals including Vitamin C and D)
- Beautyberry
- Wax Myrtle

Lymphatic System:

- Tropical Chickweed
- Plantain
- Poke (poisonous, use with caution)

Digestive

- Wax Myrtle (nutrition, stimulates absorption, diarrhea, dysentery)
- Cocoplum (leaves & bark dysentery, diarrhea)
- Sea Grape (root decoction for dysentery, bark for digestive issues)

Urinary Tract & Kidneys

- Usnea (UTI, bladder, and kidney infections)
- Goldenrod (UTI's)
- Cocoplum (leaves & bark for kindey issues)

Analgesic (Pain Relief)

- Firebush
- Gumbo Limbo
- Passionflower

Reproductive

- Smilax (men's health)
- Wax Myrtle (cramps, blood nourisher)

Spiritual Use:

Many different cultures utilize their native and local plants for spiritual use. This can include, but not be limited to, numerous different practices that help support the mental, emotional, and physical well being of the person. Examples include working with the plants to help with cleansing spaces, soliciting their aid for protection, or working with them in intentional work such as magic or spell craft. It should be noted that "spiritual use" is absolutely considered medicine in many indigenous culture, making the value of these plants just as important as those that are physically medicinal.

Examples of local plants which can be foraged for spiritual use:

- Gumbo Limbo (cleansing, protection)
- Rosary Pea* (protection, fights evil)
- Cypress (cleansing)
- Cedar (cleansing)
- Wax Myrtle (protection in pregnancy)
- Goldenrod (brooms)
- Wild Coffee (entheogenic; ritual drink)

Foraging Florida: Resources & Tips

Misha's Favorite Online Resources:

- Atlas of Florida Plants: <https://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu> (plant identification)
- Eat the Weeds: <http://www.eattheweeds.com> (FL specific edibles & medicinals)
- Cypress Pillar Healing Arts on Youtube (Misha posts plant profile videos)
- Florida School of Holistic Living: <https://www.holisticlivingschool.org/>
- Traditions School of Herbal Studies: <http://www.traditionsherbschool.com>

Misha's Favorite Books:

- Florida Wild Flowers and Roadside Plants
- Florida's Edible Wild Plants
- Florida's Incredible Wild Edibles
- Florida Wildflowers: A Comprehensive Guide
- Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida
- Any Peterson Field Guide to Edible and/or Medicinal Plants

Plant Harvesting (Wildcrafting) Tips:

Please be 10000% sure you know what you are taking. This is especially important for mushrooms. Many plants have look alikes with subtle differences, so please be certain you know what you are collecting. Consult plant guides, websites, local experts, and teachers to learn more.

Only take what you need. Try to only take the parts of the plant that you will be able to use. If you only need the flowers or leaves, trim these and leave the rest of the plant to continue growing. Spread seeds if possible from any plants you collect while you wildcraft.

Please do not harvest endangered or threatened plants. Check United Plant Savers to verify status.

Many "public" parks and natural areas have strict rules about collection of plants. Please be sure to check at any site you visit to make sure you are following the appropriate rules & regulations. On private land, ask permission of the land owner to harvest.

Try to harvest in areas that are free of pesticides, herbicides, and heavy pollution. Try not to harvest under power lines. Harvesting alongside roadways is a common practice, but please do so safely (and consider areas with less traffic and pollution).

Garble (process) your plants as soon as you can. Set them to dry, hang them, or immediately use them so that they will not go to waste.

Offer gratitude and thanks to the plants. Always thank the plants for their shared medicine.