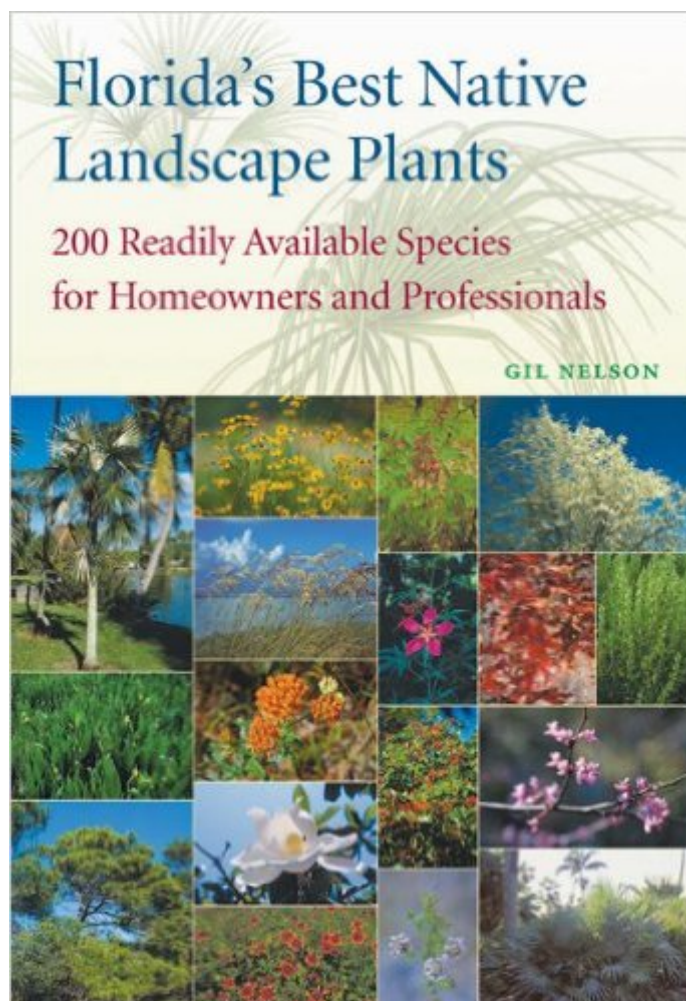


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# Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants: 200 Readily Available Species For Homeowners And Professionals



## Synopsis

"This beautifully illustrated book is loaded with practical information that professionals and homeowners will find very useful."--Jeffrey G. Norcini, University of Florida

"Gil Nelson's book provides a very good selective overview of native plants readily available in the nursery trade that can be used in landscaping and the best ways to utilize them."--Richard P. Wunderlin, author of *Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida* and *Flora of Florida, Volume 1*

*Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants* is an illustrated guide for landscape designers, home gardeners, and restoration professionals. Published in cooperation with the Association of Florida Native Plant Nurseries and the Florida Department of Transportation, it provides technical information on the design and maintenance of native plants that are readily available from the state's native plant nurseries for use in Florida gardening and landscaping. The 200 species were selected for their availability and for their general hardiness, popularity, and ease of use in both commercial and residential landscapes. All are easily found in the native plant trade and will perform well in both home and commercial landscapes. Each species profile details size and form, uses for landscaping and/or gardening, best features, range and distribution, physical appearance, culture, best companion plants, allergenic properties, cultivars, and similar species. Each account is illustrated with one or more color photos, over 700 in all, and 180 of them are further illustrated with an original watercolor. An introductory section introduces readers to the importance and benefits of using native plants in landscaping. Both federal and state guidelines mandate the incorporation of regional native plants in public site design to the maximum extent possible. Gil Nelson's book provides information for those charged with selecting easy-to-obtain native species for use in state and local parks and along our highways and assists planners and designers, architects, and homeowners in making educated decisions about native plant selection and use.

Gil Nelson is a writer, naturalist, and educator who lives and works in Tallahassee, Florida. He is the author of *Ferns of Florida*, *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida*, *Trees of Florida*, *Exploring Wild Northwest Florida*, and *Exploring Wild North Florida* and coauthor of the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida*, the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Southeast*, and *Florida Wetland Plants*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a Northern immigrant gardener to the South Florida eco-system I have found Nelson's "Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants" a useful place to meet and get to know the Florida Natives for the following reasons. 1. He has narrowed the list to 200 of the most useful plants in Landscaping. 2. It is a reference book rather than a text book--using a useful format to describe each plant. The inclusion of a category for companion plants is very helpful in getting the right plant in the right place. 3. He presents a useful summary of the wisdom of using native plants--A point that seems so obvious to me but most immigrant gardeners and almost all plant suppliers and nurseries resist. 4. The layout of devoting 2 facing pages to each plant and including a close up view, a mid-range view and a full plant photo along with very well done illustrations is unique and very helpful. What would I have liked that isn't there? 1. Foremost the biggest shortcoming is not providing a common name index. I support his decision to arrange by botanical name, and to include common name--but in this day of easily assembled indexing I find it a major shortcoming not to have included the common name index. The result is I need another book to find many of the plants--It is a cumbersome way to meet the natives--usually introduced by common or nick names. Apart from this shortcoming I would rate it a shiny five star. Less significantly: 2. Most of the pictures appear to be taken in a non-homescape or landscape setting and many are not of professional quality. 2. The format did not include or really allow space for more information on how to care for and use the plant. I find it a useful but insufficient guide to "meeting the Florida natives."

Pictures are great and info is good too. My main complaint is the the book and index is arranged alphabetical by botanical name and not common name. There is no common name index or cross reference either. It does give common names on the individual pages, so you might find what you are looking for by browsing the 411 pages. I fail to see how this is homeowner freindly unless you are

a homeowner that happens to have have a degree in horticulture.

There are so many things I love about this book. Number one, the author is extremely qualified and professional in approach. I hate books whose authors pull their "suggestions" out of thin air and base their "knowledge" on circumstantial and subjective evidence. The plants are described by natural habitat, leaf, flower, fruit and bark, which is very helpful in identification. It also gives one a more rounded view of the plant throughout our Florida seasons where the changes aren't as dramatic as "up north" and the delicate nuisances of each plant are important in planning a natural Florida-scape. There are three to four pictures of each plant and practical suggestions as to where the plants can be used in our increasingly urban settings. I'd have to agree, though, that the most useful and educational aspect of the book is the 'companion plants' section for each plant. I also would like to refute the complaint that the title claims to be a "homeowners handbook". The title states that the species have been chosen for their ready availability to homeowners i.e. they can be easily purchased from nurseries.

My copy of this book is copyright 2003, and it has a Species by Common Name Index. Maybe it is a later printing. Great book for learning the most commonly available native plants suitable for landscaping in both south and north Florida.

Florida residents and visitors to the state who want to embark on gardening projects for relatives will find Gil Nelson's Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants will provide them with a fine and knowledgeable overview of native plants available to the Florida gardener. Here is a horticultural treasure trove of choices, providing technical details on the design, maintenance, and use of a wide range of readily available native plants. The notes on companion plants are especially valuable.

This is my favorite native plant book for Florida plants! I carry this book with me every time I shop for plants, it gives me invaluable information on where it will thrive, lifespan (which most books don't have), and common issues with the plant if there are any. My native plant class uses this as its "bible" as it is so user friendly for identification of more common plants and care. It is my go to book when I'm searching for a new plant to go in my yard. I'm no native plant expert, and this book is awesome. Yes, you can easily find them by common name too, it's just a separate index.

Excellent to use as a guide book if you want to garden with natives and have them in your yard

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