

S	Elderberry
S	Buttonbush
S/ST	Florida privet
S/ST	Wax Myrtle
M/F	Canna lilies
T	Coastal willow
T	Sweetgum
T	Maples
T	Bald cypress
	Muhly grass, etc.)
G/M	Bunch grasses
G	Bahia grass
G	Mimosa ("sensitive plant")
G/M	Blue flag iris
G/M	Soft-stem bulrush
	F = Focal Point
	G = Groundcover
	M = Massing
	S = Shrub
	T = Tree
	ST = Subtree

## Plant Suggestions for Wet Areas



- During the rainy season, inspect your property for areas prone to standing water or saturated soils.
- Select plants adapted to periodic flooding but also tolerant of dry conditions that exist much of the year.
- Plant trees, shrubs and groundcovers in well-prepared planting holes with deep root zones. All plants (even lawns) need loose soil at least 12 inches deep to grow well. This has the added benefit of absorbing stormwater (reducing standing water) and reducing the frequent demand for irrigation. Some plants may require some minor elevation to improve root growth.
- Take advantage of free informational resources, such as the Cooperative Extension Service and the Florida House Learning Center. Visit <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>

## What to Do?

Southwest Florida, except along the coastline, was once part of the most common plant community in the state: pine flatwoods. Typically, flatwoods have acidic, sandy soil with a hardpan layer one to three feet below the surface. This layer, which is relatively impervious to water, causes the soil to be extremely dry during the rainy season and flooded during the dry season. The condition is typically found in established east county residential areas.

Wet areas are often a phenomenon of new developments east of I-75. However, they can occur at other locations where older homes are surrounded by new homes built on high mounds of compacted fill dirt. Problems result due to differences in elevation between neighboring homes as well as the construction of berms, swales, and retention ponds that redirect or hold stormwater on properties. In wet summers these conditions result in drainage problems and wet, boggy soil. Compacted fill dirt also reduces the infiltration of rainfall into the soil and increases stormwater runoff.

As a result, standing, pooling water can kill plants not adapted to saturated soils. This condition, sometimes called "wet feet," is periodically found in many areas of eastern Sarasota County. When planted in wet areas, plants suffer from stress, leaf spot, fungal growth, root rot, or branch dieback.

## It's Wetter

*"It's different out here,"*

is sometimes the comment from Sarasota County residents who live inland from the coast and find many landscaping differences and challenges. Here you will find the fascinating pine flatwoods, shady oak hammocks, and wetlands that many believe are the *real Florida*.

**To landscape successfully in the east county, residents must be aware of two major inland differences:**

*It's Wetter*  
*It's Colder*



For additional landscaping ideas and information, visit the Florida House Learning Center demonstration landscape on the campus of the Sarasota County Technical Institute at Beneva and Proctor Roads in Sarasota, or call 316-1200. Also, call the University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension Service at 861-9800 for any questions about landscaping.

Southwest Florida  
Water Management District

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Florida  
Native Plant  
Nursery



 Sarasota County

## What's the Difference?



Landscaping in  
*Eastern*  
Sarasota County







## Visit the Fruitville Library Reading Garden

Located just east of I-75 at 100 Coburn Road, the Friends of the Fruitville Library created a Reading Garden as a place for visitors to retreat and read, children to attend library programs, and everyone to enjoy. This garden is evolving into a delightful prime example of a cold-hardy, wetlands garden, demonstrating what can be expected when gardening east of I-75. Stop, sit, enjoy, and take home some landscape ideas to try.



## What About Irrigation?

You don't need to install an irrigation system if you consider your surroundings and plant the "right plant in the right place." Use drought-tolerant plants in areas that are high and dry. Use plants that crave water in low, damp areas of your property. Think about the *Top Seven Questions* list below when shopping at your local nursery. For about a month, hand-water all new plants daily until they are well established.

Whether you are building a new home in eastern Sarasota County or you are moving into an existing one, keep as much of the natural greenery around your house as possible. If building, place barricades around existing trees, palms and shrubs to protect their roots from construction equipment. If you save what's already growing, it is easier, less expensive, and will provide shade and buffering sooner than replanting. Using existing native plants will also acquaint you with the beauty of natural Florida.

## It's Colder

Many folks arrive in Sarasota assuming that because we live in a tropical climate, cold and frost are not important considerations when planting. Sarasota County has relatively warm winters, with an average nighttime low temperature in January of around 50 degrees. We also average several days each winter when the temperature is around or below freezing for a few hours at night.

The location of your house is crucial. During cold periods the temperatures east of I-75 are generally six to ten degrees lower than along the coast, and many tropical plants can suffer damage ranging from loss of leaves, dieback of twigs, or even death.

## What to Do?

Be aware of the cold hardiness of plants in your landscape, particularly those that are perennial and those that are big investments, such as trees, palms, and shrubs. There are many wonderful, cold-hardy plants available, especially Florida natives. It's smart to plant the majority of your property with hardy natives and use tropicals and annuals sparingly as colorful, annual fillers.

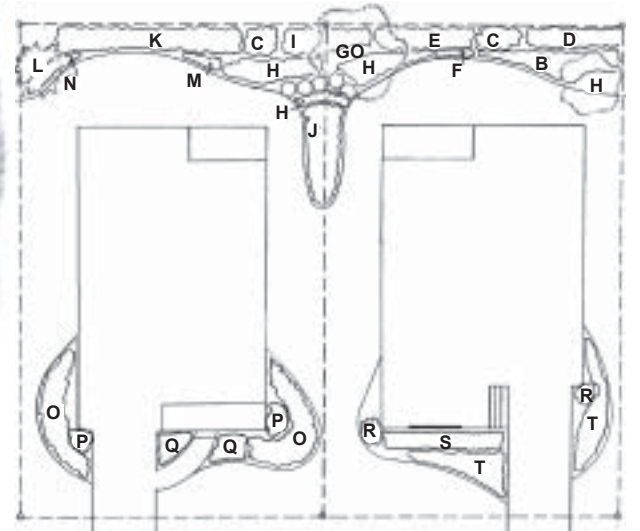


## Suggestions for Cold-Hardy Plants

**S** = Shrub                      **T** = Tree  
**G** = Groundcover          **M** = Massing  
**F** = Focal Point            **ST** = Subtree

Red maple	<b>T</b>
Southern and sweet bay magnolias	<b>T</b>
Laurel and live oaks	<b>T</b>
Slash and longleaf pines	<b>T</b>
Florida and winged elm	<b>ST/T</b>
Red bay	<b>T</b>
Loblolly bay	<b>T</b>
Red cedar	<b>S/T</b>
Bald cypress	<b>T</b>
Dahoon and East Palatka hollies	<b>T</b>
Sycamore	<b>T</b>
Wax myrtle	<b>S/ST</b>
Simpson stopper	<b>S/ST</b>
Florida privet	<b>S/ST</b>
Walter's viburnum	<b>S/ST</b>
Yaupon holly	<b>G/S</b>
Coontie	<b>G</b>

## Suggestions for residence landscaping using plants suitable for properties east of I-75



Plans for small neighboring properties

## The Top Seven Questions to Ask at Your Nursery

1. Is this plant cold hardy to USDA Zone 9a?
2. Will it survive very wet conditions?
3. What are the light and water requirements?
4. How large will it grow?
5. How much does it spread?
6. How fast does it grow?
7. Is it susceptible to pests or disease? This is not usually a problem with Florida native plants.

### Concept

### Suggestion

<b>A</b> Edible/Subtree	<i>Loquat or Citrus</i>
<b>B</b> Low Texture	<i>Ferns or Grasses</i>
<b>C</b> Accent/Diversity	<i>Crinum or Beautyberry</i>
<b>D</b> Screening/Backdrop	<i>Myrsine or Marlberry</i>
<b>E</b> Screening/Backdrop	<i>Beautyberry or Walter's Viburnum</i>
<b>F</b> Edible/Color	<i>Herbs or Annuals</i>
<b>G</b> Tree/Smaller Scale	<i>Holly or Elm</i>
<b>H</b> Texture/Color	<i>Ferns or Low Perennials</i>
<b>I</b> Screening/Backdrop	<i>Wax Myrtle or Palmetto</i>
<b>J</b> Screening	<i>Simpson Stopper or Firebush</i>
<b>K</b> Screening	<i>Eugenia spp. or Viburnum spp.</i>
<b>L</b> Accent Palm	<i>Paurotis or Florida Thatch</i>
<b>M</b> Edible/Color	<i>Herbs/Peppers or Color</i>
<b>N</b> Low Texture/Color	<i>Perennials or Ferns</i>
<b>O</b> Low Foundation	<i>Dwarf Viburnum or Ilex</i>
<b>P</b> Corner Accent	<i>Stopper or Myrsine-Tree Form</i>
<b>Q</b> Color	<i>Annuals/Perennials</i>
<b>R</b> Corner Accent	<i>"Little Gem" Magnolia or Florida Privet</i>
<b>S</b> Medium Foundation	<i>Gallberry or Dwarf Firebush</i>
<b>T</b> Groundcover	<i>Muhly Grass or Bacopa spp.</i>