

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Ideas: Top 5 Drought-Resistant Shrubs

Florida-Friendly Landscaping

So what exactly is Florida-Friendly Landscaping? It is an integrated approach to landscaping developed by the University of Florida that allows homeowners to design, install, and maintain attractive and environmentally friendly landscapes.

The 9 principles of Florida-friendly landscaping are:

- Choosing the right plant for the right place
- Fertilizing appropriately
- Attracting wildlife
- Recycling yard waste
- Protecting the waterfront
- Watering efficiently
- Using mulch in plant beds
- Managing yard pests responsibly
- Reducing storm water runoff

Shrubs

Now that you understand the concept behind Florida-friendly landscaping, let's talk a bit about shrubs. Shrubs are woody perennials in Florida landscapes. They improve air quality, stabilize the soil with their expansive root systems, and provide wildlife habitat to birds and other creatures.

Large, deciduous shrubs, if planted on the south and west sides of a home, provide shade and passive cooling effects on structures. The shade from large shrubs in the heat of summer can potentially reduce indoor cooling costs by as much as 20 percent.

The following are some particularly tough, colorful, and drought-resistant shrubs for Central Florida landscapes.

Florida-Friendly Shrubs

<p>Dwarf Allamanda (<i>Allamanda neriifolia</i>)</p> <p>Optimal Light: Sun</p> <p>Mature Height: 2ft-3ft</p> <p>Light Range: Full/Part Sun</p> <p>Mature Spread: 2ft-3ft</p> <p>Soil Moisture: Well-drained</p> <p>Soil Texture: Any</p> <p>Salt Tolerance: Low</p> <p>Florida Native: No</p> <p>Florida Region: C,S</p> <p>Hardiness Zone: 9-11</p> <p>Color: Summer - Fall</p>		<p>Dwarf Allamanda grows only 2'-3' high and 2'-3' wide and blooms best in full sun, although it will bloom in partial shade. Allamandas tolerate most soil types, but the soils should be well-drained. They are evergreen and tolerate light frost but should be considered tender to cold. They are not salt tolerant. All Allamandas are poisonous if eaten.</p>
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Esperanza (*Tecoma stans*)

Optimal Light: Sun
Mature Height: 10ft-15ft
Light Range: Full/Part Sun
Mature Spread: 5ft-10ft
Soil Moisture: Well-drained
Soil Texture: Any
Salt Tolerance: Low
Florida Native: No
Florida Region: N,C,S
Hardiness Zone: 8-11
Color: Summer-Fall



The original *Tecoma stans* from the desert shrub lands and dry forests of northern Mexico and Texas can reach 15 feet in height and makes a beautiful small tree. It can also be pruned lower and maintained as a flowering shrub. The "Gold Star" cultivar has received top ratings for being spectacularly heat-tolerant. This plant requires little water, once established.

Firebush (*Hamelia patens*)

Optimal Light: Shade/Part sun
Mature Height: 5ft-12ft
Light Range: Full/Part Sun
Mature Spread: 5ft-12ft
Soil Moisture: Well-drained
Soil Texture: Any
Salt Tolerance: Med
Florida Native: Yes
Florida Region: C,S
Hardiness Zone: 9b-11
Color: Spring - Fall



Firebush is a large shrub to small tree in its natural Florida environment, but it can be pruned to any size or shape. It quickly re-sprouts after radical pruning or even a hard freeze. Best of all, it is at the top of the list as a butterfly and hummingbird attractor! Use it as a tall background plant in a mixed annual and perennial border.

Thyrallis (*Galphimia glauca*)

Optimal Light: Full sun
Mature Height: 6ft
Light Range: Full/Part Sun
Mature Spread: 6ft
Soil Moisture: Well-drained
Soil Texture: Sandy
Salt Tolerance: Low
Florida Native: No
Florida Region: C,S
Hardiness Zone: 9-11
Color: Year-round



Thyrallis is a small evergreen tropical shrub that grows to a maximum height of about 6' and about as wide. It grows moderately fast into a neat rounded shape with many slender stems that are reddish when young. Thyrallis produces yellow blossoms in late summer and fall. Bright sunlight is preferred by this plant.

Plumbago (*Plumbago ariculata*)

Optimal Light: Sun
Mature Height: 3ft-5ft
Light Range: Full/Part Sun
Mature Spread: 3ft-5ft
Soil Moisture: Well-drained
Soil Texture: Any
Salt Tolerance: Low
Florida Native: No
Florida Region: C,S
Hardiness Zone: 8b-11
Color: Year-round



Plumbago grows 4'-6' tall and sprawls 5'-6' wide if unsupported. On a fence it will grow to cover the structure. Frost may burn the top but the woody base survives to bloom quickly in spring and throughout much of the year depending on water and fertility. It is moderately salt tolerant and pest free. Even with neglect, this shrub will produce flowers and add a colorful element to any landscape.