



# Know, Sow, Grow Flagler County

UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County

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## The Children's Garden: Where Fun is Second Nature

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What makes a children's garden unique? Since the majority of today's suburban gardens are developed and installed by adults for adults, what is left for children's play is typically an empty, open lawn. Open areas have their purpose, because they encourage active play which helps to build motor skills, muscle and bone development, as well as physical agility and stamina. But physical development is only one facet of a child's ongoing growth and development.



Photo credit: UF/IFAS Extension

A children's garden is unique when it encourages not only their physical development, but also social, emotional, creative, and intellectual aspects of their growth as well.

### Designing for Exploration

Developing an intimate space with narrow, winding pathways and tiny garden rooms allows children to slow down and notice the subtle differences between each micro-environment. More manicured areas of the children's garden can be located closer to the home where children of all ages can learn how to plant, prune, harvest, and care for plants. Farther from the house, wilder, more naturalized areas allow for unstructured, imaginative play.

### Starting Small

Keep the garden's size small-scale and accessible. Choose plants where children can access all of the plant parts for easy handling and observation, such as the stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits. Plan for the future by selecting younger plants that a child can nurture and take care of throughout their

childhood. A memorable garden is one where a child has an opportunity to see how their garden changes over time.

### Using All of the Senses

Expand a child's sensory experience in the garden by using edibles, ornamental plants, and creative materials that offer a range of colors, textures, fragrances, sounds, and tastes. There are many different kinds of shrubs, grasses, herbs, edibles, annuals, and perennials to choose from that provide a variety of sensory experiences. <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/types-of-gardens/sensory-gardens.html>.

### Nurturing Imagination and Creativity

Use of natural elements in the garden environment can provide settings for children's imaginative play. Tree stump paths and walls, vine trellises, painted rocks, pinecones, twig baskets, grasses and branches that can be used for weaving, and weeping trees and shrubs that create tiny, secret outdoors rooms are all examples of elements that provide sources of unstructured play and experiential learning.

### Providing Safety and Comfort

When choosing a site for a children's garden, an important consideration is safety. It should be an area that is easily visible, physically separated from vehicular traffic, and free of potential dangers such as sharp edges, choking hazards, poisonous plants, and standing water. Creating a balance in the garden between safety and adventure helps children feel at home in the outdoor world, while still allowing them to build confidence and self-reliance.

### Connecting With Nature



Photo credit: UF/IFAS Extension

A meaningful children's garden is one where children expand their understanding of nature and the deep connection they have to their surrounding environment.

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*(The Children's Garden, continued from page 1)*

Gardens that provide diverse, accessible, shady, and intimate spaces enable children to slow down, pause, watch, and gradually develop a long-lasting relationship with the world around them. For more information visit: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR394>.

## Carver Community Garden

Connie Balliet, Master Gardener Volunteer



Photo credit: Connie Balliet

As part of the UF/IFAS community outreach program, certified Flagler County Master Gardener volunteers, led by UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County's Residential Horticulture Agent Mimi Vreeland and Master Gardener Volunteer David Tibbetts, are providing ongoing horticulture consultation and educational workshops to the garden stewards at the Carver Community Gardens located at 201 E. Drain St in Bunnell.

The garden stewards, lovingly coined as the "Bed Heads," are a growing number of South Bunnell residents, Flagler Free Clinic employees, staff from the nearby Housing Authority, and local religious organizations.

PJ Conniff, a dedicated board member of Hammock Dunes Cares, the philanthropic arm of Hammock Dunes Club that is providing ongoing collaboration with Flagler Habitat for Humanity's Director, Lindsay Elliott, helped the Carver Community Garden spring to life.

"We are so proud to partner with the residents of the South Bunnell community to continue creating an opportunity for health and wellness in the neighborhood," says Habitat Director Lindsay Elliott. "The Carver Community Garden will allow open access to fresh fruits and vegetables they themselves are growing. Our Carver Community Garden is a space where our community has come together to build, to grow, and to share."

With the cooler January temperatures, Florida fall / winter crops are at their peak. Vegetables currently ready to eat out of the Carver Community Gardens are: broccoli, cabbage, carrots, mustard greens, Russian kale, radishes, and loose leaf lettuce.

If you would like to learn more about growing your own vegetables year-round in Florida, UF/IFAS has an abundance of information available on-line including the Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide located at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021> and ENH1211 Gardening in Raised Beds <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep472>.

In addition, planting dates and other vegetable gardening information is also available as a free mobile app called 'Florida Fresh.' Download the app at <http://m.ifas.ufl.edu>.

## How to Create a Florida Friendly Yard

Lori Powell, Master Gardener Volunteer

Including the nine FFL Principles in your landscape design will save you headaches, money, and time and protect the environment.



**Right Plant, Right Place.** Select plants according to their needs for light, moisture, and soil pH. Ensure that the plants you select will survive in your hardiness zone. Take into consideration the plant's mature size. Use native plants in your landscape.

**Water Efficiently.** Group plants together according to their water irrigation needs. Ensure the rain sensor shut-off device on your irrigation system is functioning properly. Planting beds and turf areas should be on separate irrigation zones. Irrigate only when plants or grass need it. Use a rain gauge. Water early in the day to prevent water loss from evaporation during the hotter times of the day.

**Fertilize Appropriately.** Only use slow-release fertilizers. Do not fertilize if a heavy rain is expected, and don't over-irrigate after applying. Follow the directions on the fertilizer package.

**Mulch.** Mulch helps to retain moisture, adds nutrients to the Soil, and prevents weeds. Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch around plants and trees, keeping it away from stems, Trunks, and building foundations. Choose recycled mulch or alternatives like melaleuca, leaves, pine needles, or bark.

**Attract Wildlife.** Plant vines, shrubs, and trees to create cover, nesting areas, and food. Add bird baths, bat houses, and bird feeders to your landscape. Plant flowers that attract butterflies and bees.

**Manage Landscape Pests.** Scout your yard regularly. Use insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils rather than harsh chemicals.

**Recycle.** Leave grass clippings on the lawn to recycle nitrogen. Use fallen leaves and pine needles as mulch under trees and plants. Create and maintain a compost pile.

**Reduce Stormwater Runoff.** Keeping rain and sprinkler water on your yard and out of the storm drains reduces pollution of our bays, rivers, and lakes. Ensure gutter down spouts are directed to flow onto planting beds and turf and not onto hard surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks. Use a rain barrel to collect rain water for irrigation.

**Protect the Waterfront.** Create a 10-20 foot buffer zone to the shoreline where no pesticides or fertilizers are applied. Plant a buffer zone of low-maintenance plants between your lawn and shoreline to absorb nutrients and to provide wildlife habitat.

For more information visit: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>, <http://FloridaYards.org> and <http://fjn.ifas.ufl.edu>.





## Message in the Flower

Connie Balliet, Master Gardener Volunteer



Lady Mary Wortley Montague, 1716 by Charles Jervas currently on display at the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin

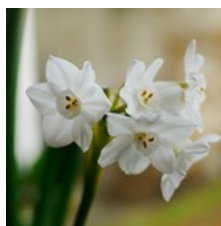
In Victorian times, appropriate conversations were guided by social etiquette and censorship creating a society that used symbolic meaning of objects to express what otherwise could not be spoken. Those with an interest in botany, naturally looked to flowers and herbs used in horticulture and gardening to express secret meanings.

In 1716, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, wife of the Turkish Ambassador, wrote home to England about “a mysterious language of love and gallantry.” In a letter to a friend, she described the use of objects to communicate, calling it a “Turkish love letter.” She wrote of this language: “There is no colour, no flower, no weed, no fruit, herb, pebble, or feather that has not a verse belonging to it: and you may quarrel, reproach, or send letters of passion, friendship, or civility, or

even of news, without ever inking your fingers.” Later in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Floriography, the formalized Language of Flowers, was developed and a method of silent communication was born.

Today the meaning of flowers is used to mark the beginning of life and death and happy occasions such as weddings and birthdays. Birth Flowers and their meaning have been assigned to every month of the year. Let’s look at December, January and February.

December’s birth flowers are the Narcissus (*Narcissus spp.*) and Holly (*Ilex spp.*). The Narcissus is symbolic of good wishes, hope, honesty, truth, wealth, and forgiveness. Narcissus flowers are known for their trumpet-like center. In Florida, narcissus have winter interest due to its unusual form, nice persistent fruits, and showy winter trunk, or winter flower. Narcissus flowers are given as a symbol of forgiveness, or in appreciation and is often linked to a Greek term for intoxicated sweetness, self-esteem, and vanity.



Narcissus, Photo Credit: UF/IFAS



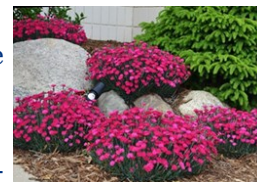
Holly, Photo credit: UF/IFAS

Hollies are reliable, low-maintenance plants for Florida landscapes. Diverse sizes, forms, and textures exist, ranging from large trees to dwarf shrubs.

Hollies are valued for their colorful berries, which provide food for birds and brighten the fall and winter seasons. Several hollies are native to Florida. Holly is a convenient birth plant for December since it is so popular around the holidays. It symbolizes protection and defense.

January’s birth flowers are Carnation (*D. caryophyllus*) and Snowdrop (*Leucojum spp.*) Dianthus is a cool-season bedding plant, a species of flower that includes “pinks” and carnations.

Carnations are taller and popular in the floral industry for bouquets but tend to be less hardy than other dianthus in Florida. The flowers are given in admiration and love. Leonardo da Vinci displayed the connection of pink carnations with a symbol of mother’s love with his 1475 painting “The Madonna with the Carnation.”



Dianthus, Photo credit: UF/IFAS Volusia County Extension

Similar to roses, the different colors of carnations have different meanings: a pink carnation means ‘affection,’ while a red carnation means ‘I love you.’ Striped carnations mean ‘regret that a love is not shared,’ while white carnations mean ‘pure love,’ and yellow means ‘rejection or disappointment.’



Snowdrop, Photo credit: Chicago Botanic Garden

Snowdrop is a genus of flowering plants from the Amaryllis family. They naturalize and reproduce when left uninterrupted and thrive best under the shade of trees and shrubs. The fragrant flowers attract pollinators and bloom in mid-winter to early spring. Snowdrops grow best in USDA hardiness zones 3 to 9 depending on the species and cultivated varieties. They symbolize ‘hope and rebirth.’

February’s birth flowers are Violet and Primrose. Florida violets are native, perennial wildflowers found in open woods and clearings throughout Florida. They have lovely purple, yellow, or white flowers and grow low to the ground. There are countless species of native violets including the common blue violet (*Viola sororia*), Walter’s violet (*Viola walteri*), Bog white violet (*Viola lanceolata*), and Sand violet (*Viola affinis*).



Violet, Photo credit: Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, Bugwood.org



Seabeach Primrose, Photo credit: Josiah Raymer, UF/IFAS

The violet’s purple-hued bloom is a symbol of ‘modesty, faithfulness, and virtue.’ In the Victorian age, a gift of violets was a declaration to always be true, a reminder of loyalty, thoughtfulness and dependability. The older English name for violet is “heart tease.”

Seabeach evening primrose (*Oenothera humifusa*) is found in beach dunes throughout coastal counties in Florida. The pale-yellow perennial symbolizes ‘passionate young love, modesty, distinction, and virtue.’

For more information visit: Hollies at a Glance: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg021>, Dianthus: <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/dianthus.html>, and (continued on next page)

(The Message in the Flower, continued from page 3)

<https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfFloridaIfasVolusiaCountyExtension/posts/there-are-many-species-and-varieties-of-dianthus-and-all-will-provide-lots-of-co/1292418057585125/>, Snowdrop Flowers (Galanthus): Types, How to Grow and Care: <https://florgeous.com/snowdrop/>, Florida Violets: <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/florida-violets.html>, and Seabeach Evening Primrose, *Oenothera humifus*: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/sg177>.



## Arbor Day

Lori Powell, Master Gardener Volunteer

Arbor Day in the state of Florida is celebrated on the third Friday in January. While National Arbor is celebrated the last day of April, it is celebrated earlier in Florida because Florida warms up earlier.

Arbor Day has been celebrated since 1886. Arbor Day promotes the benefits of trees in the urban environment and encourages the planting and care of trees.

Tree City USA is an Arbor Day Foundation Program that was established in 1976 that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. It also provides national recognition of the community. For the year 2019, there were 156 Tree Cities in Florida including Palm Coast.

Requirements for the program are that the city have: a tree committee or urban forestry department, tree ordinances for public trees, a \$2 per capita expenditure for tree care, an annual urban forestry plan, and an Arbor Day celebration and proclamation.

For more information visit: <http://www.Arborday.org>.

## Plant a Tree

Lori Powell, Master Gardener Volunteer

Plant a tree in celebration of Arbor Day. When planting a tree keep in mind the following:

**Call before you dig.** Call the national number 811 hotline to have underground utilities identified.

**Dig the hole.** Dig the hole at least twice the width of the diameter of the root ball.

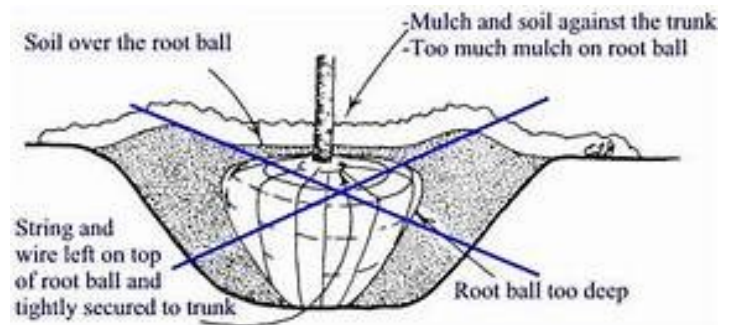
**Plant at the right depth.** The trunk flare should sit slightly above ground level. Remove any string, burlap, or wire on the root ball prior to placing in the hole.

**Fill the hole.** Backfill the hole with the same soil from the hole you dug. There is no need to apply fertilizer.

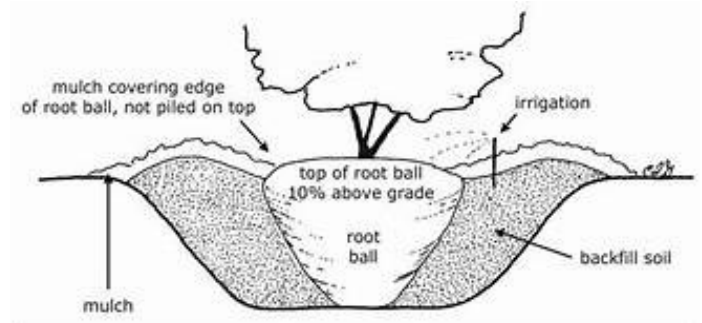
**Mulch.** Apply 2-4 inches of mulch. Do not apply mulch against the stem of the tree. The larger the mulched area around the tree, the less competition it will have from other plants and turf for moisture. The size of the mulched area depends on the size of the tree. For a tree with a 2 inch diameter trunk, a mulch circle of at least 6 feet in diameter is recommended.

**Water.** Keep the soil moist, but not water-logged. When the soil is dry below the surface of the mulch, it is time to water.

For more information visit: <https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/planting.shtml>.



## WRONG WAY

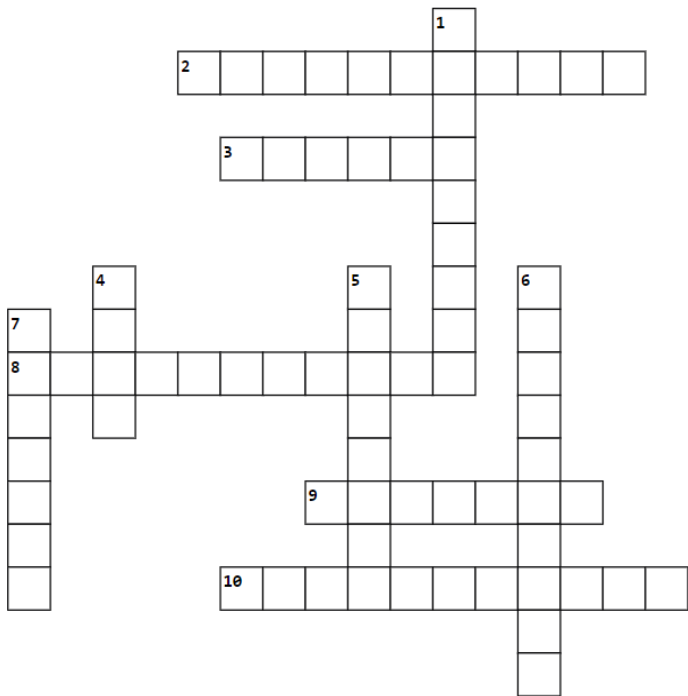


## RIGHT WAY





## Plant Terms



### Across

- 2 the process of growing new plants through a variety of methods such as cuttings, seeds, or grafts
- 3 the offspring of two plants of different species or varieties created by cross pollination in a controlled environment
- 8 the science of growing plants in mineral solutions or liquid in stead of using soil
- 9 the term used to describe when a plant prematurely produces a glowering stem in an attempt to produce seeds
- 10 term for seed sprouting

### Down

- 1 the ability of a plant to withstand cold temperatures or frost without the protections of greenhouses, hoop-houses, or cloches
- 4 the point on the stem of a plant where branches, leaves, or flowers originate
- 5 a variety of plant that has been passed down within a community over a long period of time
- 6 anything that aides in the transfer of pollen between plants and flowers such as bees, birds, wind, bats, insects, and wind
- 7 an underground stem that grows horizontally from nodes rather than vertically like most other plants

## Winter Planting Guide

### Vegetables

Beets  
 Broccoli  
 Carrots  
 Cabbage  
 Cauliflower  
 Collards  
 Endive  
 Kohlrabi

Lettuce  
 Mustard  
 Radishes  
 Swiss Chard  
 Turnips

### Annuals/Perennials

Agapanthus  
 Camelia  
 Crinum  
 Dianthus  
 Gloriosa Lilly  
 Petunias  
 Pansy  
 Snapdragon

### Herbs

Cilantro  
 Chives  
 Fennel  
 Parsley  
 Thyme

UF/IFAS Extension provides a printable garden calendar. Planting dates and other vegetable gardening information are also available as a free mobile app called 'Florida Fresh.' Access an app provider for your mobile phone or download it from <http://m.ifas.ufl.edu>.



## UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County Master Gardener Volunteers

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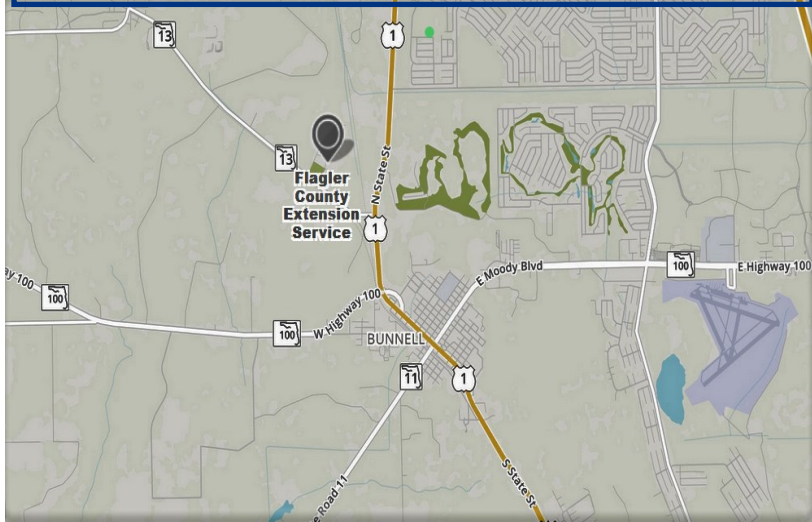
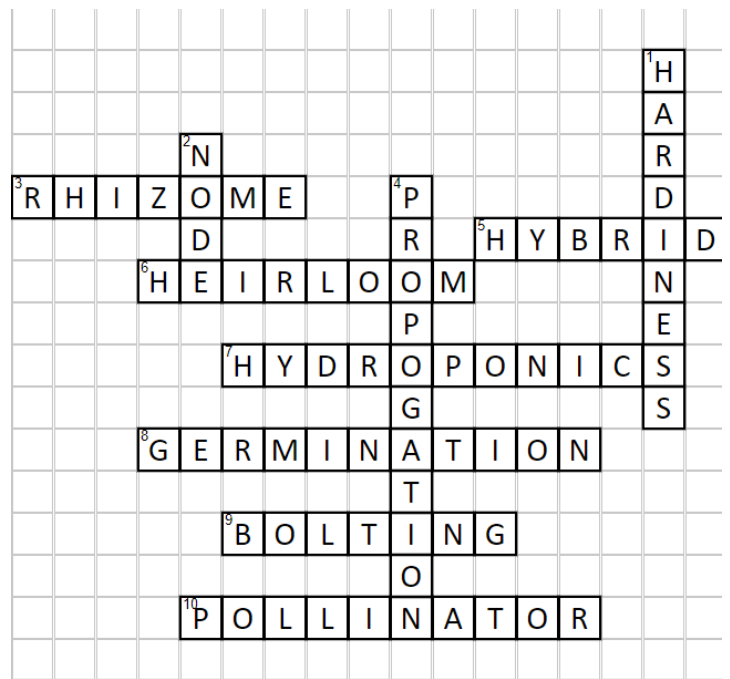
### Our Mission

To assist Extension Agents in providing research-based horticultural education to Florida residents.

### Our Vision

To be the most trusted resource for horticultural education in Florida.

## Crossword Puzzle Answers



## Stay Connected!

Flagler County Extension: <http://flagler.ifas.ufl.edu>

University of Florida Solutions for Your Life: <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu>

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™: <http://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu>

UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

University of Florida Master Gardener: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener>

The Flagler County Master Gardener and Horticulture program is open to all regardless of gender, race, color, nationality, creed, or disability.