

in the garden *by Stephen and Kristin Pategas*



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Plants, People...Food

Since the first humans received sustenance from plants we have out of necessity been hooked on them.

For most people the challenge of the hunter-gatherer days are long gone unless you make a trek through supermarket aisles when they are packed with carts. Today's produce sections are chock full of an amazing diversity of edibles that cross time zones, continents, and cultures. With good design, some ingenuity, proper timing, and suitable growing conditions you can harvest a surprising diversity of edible plants from your garden.

Expand your horizons and travel beyond the traditional vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Make a garden more engaging by incorporating plants with parts that can pass between your lips and tickle your taste buds. If

you have had your fill of citrus and other common edibles consider these safe-to-eat plants. However never ingest any part of a plant unless you are certain it is edible. There are poisonous and irritating plants in nature and the garden.

Some fruits may require a minimum amount of chilling hours and cooking or processing. When selecting plants in the Orlando area, consider we receive 350-500 chilling hours with an average minimum temperature of 22 to 27 degrees (plant hardiness Zone 9a/b depending upon local conditions that create micro-climates). An excellent reference is the book "Florida's Best Fruiting Plants" by Charles Boning. It even includes a list of nurseries.



Pineapple guava's flower petals have a pineapple/cinnamon flavor



Carissa has edible fruits and fragrant flowers



Southern Home grape has ornamental leaves



The pindo palm has sweet fruit

A selection of plants which produce fruit or an edible part:

- Tea plant** - Camellia sinensis (leaves and buds dried to brew tea)
- Kumquat** - Fortunella spp. (sweet/tart citrus relative fruit)
- Beautyberry** - Callicarpa americana (fruit to process)
- Fig** - Ficus carica (fruit)
- Carissa/natal plum** - Carissa macrocarpa (fruit)
- Pawpaw** - Asimina triloba (fruit)
- Persimmon** - Diospyros kaki (fruit)
- Pomegranate** - Punica granatum (fruit)
- Simpson's stopper** - Myrcianthes fragrans (fruit)
- Blackberry** - Rubus spp. (fruit)

- Blueberry** - Vaccinium spp. (fruit)
- Pindo palm** - Butia capitata (fruit)
- Loquat** - Eriobotrya japonica (fruit)
- Pineapple guava** - Acca sellowiana (flower petals and fruit)
- Nasturtiums** - Tropaeolum majus (flowers, leaves, seed pods, tubers)
- Ceriman** - Monstera deliciosa (fruit ripens about a year after bloom, cold sensitive)
- Maypop** - Passiflora incarnata (fruit)
- Che** - Cudrania tricuspidata (fruit)
- Elderberry** - Sambucus spp. (fruit to cook)
- Olive** - Olea europaea (fruit must be processed)
- Grape** - Vitis x 'Southern Home' (fruit, cross between muscadine and bunch grape)

TRIVIA QUESTION:

What are the only five commercially grown fruits native to North America?
Hint: Three of them grow in Florida.
Answer below.

Trivia question answer: Muscadine grape, blueberry, cranberry, blackberry, and raspberry

Kristin and Stephen Pategas design landscapes and garden at their home and business Hortus Oasis in Winter Park.
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All photography by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus Oasis