

## See the Master Gardeners' Garden in Bloom

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Want to know more about flowers you can plant for color in your home landscape? Then come browse the Leon County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden. The garden is at the Leon County Agricultural Center, 615 Paul Russell Road.

The garden is a mixture of flowering perennials, annuals, ornamental grasses, groundcovers, and some shrubs. An arboretum, to showcase trees, is even being started on the site. You can learn the secrets of how the Master Gardeners created such a show of color, some of it from seed.

You will see low-maintenance roses in full bloom and perennials such as *indigofera* that have begun flowering. For a fairly complete list of the plants in the garden, visit the webpage,

[http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/Demo\\_Garden\\_Plant\\_List.htm](http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/Demo_Garden_Plant_List.htm)

The demonstration garden is a teaching garden maintained by the Master Gardeners, a volunteer group trained and managed by the UF-IFAS Leon County Extension, with the purpose of teaching the public to be better stewards of the urban landscape. The demonstration garden started primarily as a trial garden, in cooperation with one of the local nurseries, to test the suitability of new annuals and perennials being sold in the nurseries for our area. For years the garden was located on the grounds of Tallahassee Nurseries. But three years ago the garden's focus was changed from trial to demonstration of plants and how they are to be used in the landscape. At that time the garden was moved to the grounds of the Agriculture Center.

The Agriculture Center grounds, before the demonstration garden, were a typical 1960's to 1970's landscape of foundation planting and huge centipede lawn. Only a few trees had been started. Now the landscape consists of large beds and a much smaller lawn. The trees are growing and now there is considerably more shade on the site, too. The long-range goal is to have more wooded or shaded areas, more typical of a natural Tallahassee landscape.

Though the focus is on low-maintenance plants, plants that don't have lots of pest problems or require large amounts of water, the garden is by no means "no-maintenance". Tons of mulch have been spread in the beds, repeatedly. Weeds have to

See the Master Gardeners

be pulled regularly. And, though watering is done with a low-volume irrigation system, water is nevertheless required during plant establishment and during prolonged periods of dry weather. Fertilizer is used sparingly, mostly just on some of the flowering annuals. There is just no such thing as a “no-maintenance” garden, and home gardeners need to realize that, in general, the larger the garden, the greater the maintenance, even when you’re using relatively low-maintenance plants.

So, come out and glean a few plant ideas for your own home landscape.

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*Photo of the Demonstration Garden is by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Extension, Leon County.*

[\[Back\]](#)