



Staying Green While Conserving Water in Miami-Dade: A Selection of both Native and Non-Native Drought Tolerant Shrubs and Trees

The list below is a selection of some highly drought-tolerant trees and shrubs for full sun exposure that should be amenable to growing in Miami-Dade and is based on three articles [available on-line](#). Given south Florida’s seasonally wet/dry climate none of the listed trees/shrubs, once established, should need supplemental water. Both the familiar and unfamiliar, native and non-native species have been selected. If you are unable to find plants in local garden centers try specialist nurseries (Florida native, flowering trees/shrubs), mail order sources or area plant societies, fairs and rambles.

TYPE: growth habit (shrub and/or tree, usual form shown first)

SIZE: locally expected height in feet.

USE:

- shade (**sh**)
- ornamental interest (**or**)
- specimen (**sp**)
- screen/hedge (**sc**)

SALT:

- **high** or **low** tolerance
- **coastal**, combination of wind tolerance and moderate to high salt tolerance make these suited to coastal locations.

Leaf loss:

- **x** (evergreen, but locally some species [**xx**] can exhibit noticeable leaf loss in winter)
- **y** (deciduous)
- **z** (brevi-deciduous – leaf drop is rapidly followed by emergence of new leaves.)

Asterisk* = native to South Florida; **b** = usually grown as climbers (need support);

| | TYPE | USE | SIZE | SALT |
|---|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Acacia pinetorum</i> ^{*x} (Pineland Acacia) | shrub | or, sc | 5–8 | high |
| <i>Alvaradoa amorphoides</i> ^{*x} (Mexican Alvaradoa) | tree/shrub | or, sp | 10-25 | |

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|---|--------------------|------------|-------|---------|
| <i>Argusia gnaphalodes</i> ^{**x} (Sea Lavender) | shrub | or, sp | 3- 6 | coastal |
| <i>Bonellia macrocarpa</i> ^x (Cudjoewood) | shrub/tree | or, sp | 6–15 | coastal |
| <i>Bougainvillea glabra</i> & hybrids ^x (Paper Flower) | shrub ^b | or, sp, sc | 8 (+) | high |
| <i>Bouyeria succulenta</i> ^{**x} (Bahama Strongback) | shrub/tree | or, sp | 20 | high |
| <i>Brya ebenus</i> ^x (Jamaican Ebony) | tree/shrub | or, sp | 15–30 | |
| <i>Bulnesia arborea</i> ^x (Verawood) | tree | or/sh | 30 | low |
| <i>Bursera simaruba</i> ^{*z} (Gumbo Limbo) | tree | sp/or | 20-50 | high |
| <i>Byrsonima lucida</i> ^{**x} (Locustberry) | shrub/tree | or, sp | 18 | |
| <i>Caesalpinia cassioides</i> ^x (Cassia-leafed Caesalpinia) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 6-15 | low |
| <i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i> ^x (Pride of Barbados) | shrub/tree | or/sp/sc | 10 | |
| <i>Caesalpinia vesicaria</i> ^x (Indian Savin) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 10-20 | coastal |
| <i>Caesalpinia violacea</i> ^x (Brasiletto) | tree | or/sh | 40-50 | |
| <i>Callicarpa americana</i> ^{**x} (Beautyberry) | shrub | or/sp | 6-8 | low |
| <i>Calotropis gigantea</i> ^x (Giant milkweed) | shrub | or/sp/sc | 8-12 | coastal |
| <i>Capparis cynophallophora</i> ^{**x} (Jamaican Caper) | shrub/tree | sp/or/sc | 18 | coastal |

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|---|------------|----------|-------|---------|
| <i>Carissa macrocarpa</i> ¹ (Natal Plum) | shrub | sp/or/sc | 5-15 | coastal |
| <i>Cassia afrofistula</i> ¹ (Dwarf Golden Shower) | tree | or/sp | 15-20 | high |
| <i>Cassia fistula</i> ^y (Golden Shower Tree) | tree | or/sp | 30-40 | |
| <i>Coccoloba uvifera</i> ^{*x} (Sea Grape) | tree/shrub | sp/sc | 12-30 | coastal |
| <i>Conocarpus erectus</i> ^{*x} (Buttonwood) | tree/shrub | sp/sc | 10-30 | coastal |
| <i>Cordia boissieri</i> ^x (Texas Wild Olive) | tree | or/sp | 20 | |
| <i>Cordia dodecandra</i> ^x (Sircote) | tree | or/sh | 30-50 | coastal |
| <i>Cordia gerascanthus</i> ^x (Huizache) | tree | sh/or | 50 | |
| <i>Cordia lutea</i> ^x (Yellow Cordia) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 10-25 | |
| <i>Cordia sebestena</i> ^x (Geiger Tree) | tree | or | 25 | coastal |
| <i>Cordia subcordata</i> ^x (Sea trumpet) | tree | or/sh | 15-30 | coastal |
| <i>Crescentia alata</i> ^{xx} (Mexican Calabash) | tree | or/sp/sh | 20 | |
| <i>Crossopetalum ilicifolium</i> ^{*x} (Quailberry) | shrub | or | 2 | low |
| <i>Crossopetalum rhacoma</i> ^{*x} (Rhacoma) | shrub | or/sp | 2-6 | low |
| <i>Delonix elata</i> ^x (Creamy Peacock Flower) | tree | or/sh | 12-30 | |
| <i>Delonix regia</i> ^y | | | | |

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|---|------------|----------|-------|---------|
| (Royal Poinciana) | tree | or/sh | 40 | |
| <i>Dodonea viscosa</i> ^{**x} (Varnish Leaf) | shrub/tree | or/sp/sc | 18 | coastal |
| <i>Enterolobium cyclocarpum</i> ^y (Ear Pod Tree) | tree | sh/or | 35-60 | low |
| <i>Euphorbia punicea</i> ^x (Jamaican Poinsettia) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 10-15 | high |
| <i>Ficus citrifolia</i> ^{**x} (Short-leaf Fig) | tree | sh/sp | 45 | |
| <i>Forestiera segregata</i> ^{**x} (Florida Privet) ¹ | shrub/tree | sh/sc/sp | 15 | high |
| <i>Gliricidia sepium</i> ^y (Madre de cacao/Quick Stick) | tree/shrub | or/sp/sc | 20 | |
| <i>Guaiacum sanctum</i> ^{**x} (Lignum Vitae) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 6-25 | coastal |
| <i>Hamelia cuprae</i> ^{xx} (Bahamas Firebush) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 15 | coastal |
| <i>Hamelia patens</i> ^{**xx} (Firebush) | shrub/tree | or/sp/sc | 5-15 | |
| <i>Ilex krugiana</i> ^{**x} (Krug's Holly) | tree | sp/or | 30 | high |
| <i>Jacquinea arborea</i> ^x (Braceletwood) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 5-15 | coastal |
| <i>Jacquinia keyensis</i> ^{**x} (Joewood) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 10 | coastal |
| <i>Jatropha integerrima</i> ^x (Peregrina) | shrub | or/sp | 8 | |
| <i>Jatropha podagrica</i> ^x (Gout Plant) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 8-10 | |

¹ Pineland privet, *Forestiera segregata* var. *pinetorum*^{*} is a low growing shrub less tolerant of salt

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|---|--------------------|-----------|-------|---------|
| <i>Krugiodendron ferreum</i> ^{**x} (Black Ironwood) | tree | sp/or | 30 | |
| <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> ^y (Crepe Myrtle) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 5-20 | low |
| <i>Lantana involucrata</i> ^{**x} (Buttonsage) | shrub | or | 4-5 | low |
| <i>Lawsonia inermis</i> ^x (Henna) | shrub/tree | or/sp/scr | 6-10 | |
| <i>Lysiloma latisiliqua</i> ^{**x} (Wild Tamarind) | tree | sp/sh | 30 | high |
| <i>Lysiloma sabicu</i> ^x (Sabicu/Horseflesh) | tree | sh/sp | 25 | high |
| <i>Markhamia lutea</i> ^x (Mgambo) | tree | or/sp/sh | 40 | low |
| <i>Mimusops caffra</i> ^x (Coastal Milkwood) | tree/shrub | or/sp/sh | 10-30 | coastal |
| <i>Nectandra coriacea</i> ^{**x} (Lancewood) | tree/shrub | or/sh | 15-25 | |
| <i>Noronhia emaginata</i> ^x (Madagascar Olive) | tree | sp/or | 15-25 | coastal |
| <i>Oncoba spinosa</i> ^{xx} (Spiny Oncoba) | tree/shrub | or/sc | 12-25 | low |
| <i>Pentalinon luteum</i> ^{**x} (Wild Allamanda) | shrub ^b | or | 15 | low |
| <i>Piscidia piscipula</i> ^{*y} (Jamaica Dogwood) | tree | or/sp | 30 | high |
| <i>Pithecellobium keyense</i> ^{**x} (Blackbead) | shrub/tree | or | 10-20 | high |
| <i>Plumeria pudica</i> ^x (Bridal Bouquet) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 12-15 | coastal |
| <i>Plumeria hybrids</i> ^y | | | | |

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|---|--------------------|----------|--------|---------|
| (Frangipani) | tree/shrub | or/sp | 12-20 | high |
| <i>Poitea carinalis</i> ^z (Caribwood) | tree | or/sp | 15-20 | low |
| <i>Pyrostegia venusta</i> ^x (Flame vine) | shrub ^b | or | 25-100 | low |
| <i>Reynosa septentrionalis</i> ^{**x} (Darling plum) | shrub/tree | sp/or | 15-20 | coastal |
| <i>Rondeletia leucophylla</i> ^x (Bush Pentas) | shrub/tree | or/sc/sp | 6-15 | |
| <i>Russelia equisetiformis</i> ^x (Fountain Plant) | shrub | or/sc/sp | 4-5 | high |
| <i>Samanea saman</i> ^x (Rain tree) | tree | sh/sp/or | 50-80 | |
| <i>Sapindus saponaria</i> ^{**z} (Soapberry) | tree | sh/sp | 20-45 | high |
| <i>Senna mexicana var. chapmanii</i> ^{**x} (Bahama Senna) | shrub | or | 3-5 | high |
| <i>Senna polyphylla</i> ^x (Desert Cassia) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 9-15 | high |
| <i>Sideroxylon foetidissimum</i> ^{**x} (False Mastic) | tree | sh/or | 50-75 | coastal |
| <i>Sideroxylon salicifolium</i> ^{**x} (Willow Busic) | shrub/tree | sp/or/sh | 10-30 | high |
| <i>Simarouba glauca</i> ^{**x} (Paradise Tree) | tree | sh/or | 30-50 | high |
| <i>Suriana maritima</i> ^{**x} (Bay Cedar) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 6-12 | coastal |
| <i>Tabebuia aurea</i> ^{2z} (Silver Trumpet Tree) | tree | or | 20-25 | |

² Synonyms: *Tabebuia caraiba*, *T. argentea*

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|---|------------|----------|-------|---------|
| <i>Tabebuia bahamensis</i> ^y (Five Fingers) | tree | or | 20 | |
| <i>Tabebuia berteroi</i> ^y (Hispaniolan Rosy Trumpet Tree) | tree | or | 20-30 | |
| <i>Tabebuia haemantha</i> ^y (Roble Cimarón) | tree/shrub | or | 25 | |
| <i>Tabebuia heterophylla</i> ^{xx3} (White Cedar) | tree | or/sh | 20-25 | |
| <i>Tabebuia impetiginosa</i> ^{y4} (Ipe) | tree | or | 20-30 | |
| <i>Tamarindus indica</i> ^x (Tamarind) | tree | sh/or | 50 | coastal |
| <i>Tecoma castanifolia</i> ^x (Chestnut Leaved Trumpet Tree) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 15-20 | |
| <i>Tecoma stans</i> ^x (Yellow elder) | shrub/tree | or/sp | 15 | |
| <i>Tetrazygia bicolor</i> ^{*x} (Florida tetrazygia) | shrub/tree | or/sp/sc | 6-12 | |

³ Synonym: *Tabebuia pentaphylla*

⁴ Some authorities assign the name *Handroanthus impetiginosus* to this taxon