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IFAS EXTENSION

Friday's Feature

By

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### Holiday gift ideas for the Florida gardener

The holidays are the perfect time to show your favorite gardener how much you care. There are many thoughtful gardening gifts for every price range, from just a few dollars to many hundreds. And there's something for every taste.

Books make great gifts. When choosing a book for your Florida gardener, ensure that it addresses the unique growing conditions in the southeast. When choosing a book about plants, try to find one that lists them by hardiness zone. The hardiness zone classification is a handy guide to selecting plants that will be successful in your specific environment.

*Your Florida Guide to Perennials* by Sydney Park Brown and Rick Schoellhorn is a must have for anyone who wants to know more about growing perennials in Florida's challenging environmental conditions. All the basics are covered from preparing the soil to utilizing a Florida-friendly approach to maintaining your perennial garden. With over 250 perennials featured and nearly 200 color photos, this book is like having a garden mentor that you can come back to again and again.

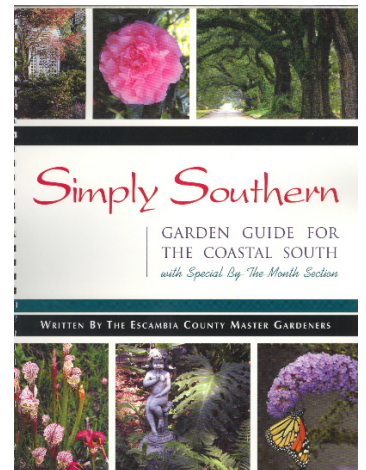
Another book to consider, especially for anyone who wants a healthy looking lawn, is *The Florida Lawn Handbook* by Drs. Laurie Trenholm and Bryan Unruh. The new third edition is now available and is completely up-to-date. This "how-to" book is written in practical language by turfgrass experts and covers everything from how to prepare your soil and select your grass to how to deal with weeds, insects and diseases.

*Groundcovers for the South* by Master Gardener Marie Harrison discusses various kinds of plants that can be used as groundcovers, from perennials and herbs to shrubs and native plants. This book is beautifully illustrated with color photographs and line drawings throughout.

*Simply Southern* written by the Escambia County Master Gardeners is a great book on local gardening. This book was designed to introduce newcomers to Northwest Florida and coastal gardening. It is filled with researched and experience-based information and is enthusiastically presented. For more information on how to order your copy of *Simply Southern*, go to [http://escambia.ifas.ufl.edu/hort\\_simplysouthern.htm](http://escambia.ifas.ufl.edu/hort_simplysouthern.htm) or call the Escambia County Extension office at 475-5230.

For the avid gardener, one who appreciates the value of Latin plant names, *The Pronouncing Dictionary of Plant Names* is now available in a new edition. Offered by the American Nurseryman Publishing Co. this handy little dictionary contains more than 3000 botanical names. Each is spelled phonetically and contains a brief description of the plant name origin and its meaning.

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Other ideas to buy the gardener is an entire gardening tool set, or just one or two single high-quality items, like pruning shears with replaceable blades, or a spade, shovel, or rake. Gardening shoes, clogs, or boots are great utilitarian items for those of us who like to dig in the dirt. Gloves and hats often need to be replaced. Other ideas for the gardener are wheelbarrows, birdbaths, birdfeeders, bat houses, or fountains.

Indulge your favorite gardener's passion with holiday gifts from the heart.

Theresa Friday is the Residential Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

For additional information about all of the county extension services and other articles of interest go to:

<http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/extension>.