

Roots movement growing across the nation.

In many small towns across the country there are community gardens growing and farmers markets cropping up in great numbers. Check out local harvest.org for some great inspiration for this. Almost every major town has a market and more than 75% of the country is green with farms. People are emerging from their homes with new talents and beginning new careers selling their own farm goods and products. The movement towards sustainability is happening fast and the people are the ones out there doing the groundwork in their community. Here in our little town we have a wonderful Thursday market and many other local markets found all summer. We have 2 community gardens, garden clubs, and a recently developed edible garden tour to private homes doing permaculture/edible landscapes. This resurgence is attracting people to a movement towards examining our woodlands and state parks, opening up our minds to the useable plants that surround us, instead of bringing in plants that don't belong or don't serve a purpose and may take much more maintenance. The native Americans believed that there is a cure for every dis-ease within a 50 mile radius of every human on the planet. And now we are identifying many native usable plants here in our own backyard. So before you kill it, identify it, it may be there to help heal you. Spanish needles is a pretty white petaled flower with a yellow center that helps to lower blood pressure. Many

people are seeking alternatives to help heal these new health issues that perplex many mainstream doctors. Food is being reexamined as we have observed agriculture dramatically change in the past 40 years. With our desire to grow the perfect wheat berry, perfect soybean and corn we have actually adulterated it with genetic engineering ,rendering damage to our land, water and ourselves. Autoimmune issues are one of the biggest rising health issues and it is forcing many to purge their diets of gluten and sugar. Also some of the culprits of inflammation is white potato, peppers and eggplant all in the poison nightshade family which is a big factor causing psoriasis and arthritis flare up. What gluten free eaters may not realize in their search for bread like substitutes or pasta, is that there is a lot of corn and white potato in these which can also cause a huge rise in blood sugar. But right here in your south Florida landscape there are some fantastic solutions that can help you heal and can grow in any soil. First is, sweet potato & yams, high in beta carotene , Vitamin C, magnesium, and anti inflammatory, great for your gut and won't spike your glycemic level. Yams also help with muscle cramps. rheumatoid arthritis and menopause. Second, cassava a wonderful huge root that grows like a weed. Needs a bit more boiling than white potato but is highly nutritious beyond the old spud. It is high in protein, calcium, more potassium, and magnesium, that can ease muscle pain. Our third wonderful edible superfood, is longevity spinach. Not only does it make a beautiful ground cover, but it lowers cholesterol, blood pressure, regulates blood

sugar and is anti-inflammatory, to name a few. Number four amazing landscape plant is chaya, which offers a lovely nectar rich flower to the bees and butterflies. It takes some extra boiling and a water change but worth the effort. It has more protein than most greens, good for blood circulation, strengthens veins, reduces cholesterol, nourishes the brain, providing rich iron, and reduces inflammation. For our fifth fancy food, is katuk and magical green that is so nutty and tasty if you closed your mouth while eating it you would think it was a nut. 8% protein, vitamin K, vitamin B, calcium and helps treat influenza. So many more wonderful things to grow here in this great climate, bananas grow easily with a little extra mulching, papaya fruits in 9 months, black pepper vines near the house, succulent cuban oregano, medicinal plants like Chaste tree, such a good tonic for women. Jamaican roselle to help regulate your body to the heat, passion flower to calm the mind. These are a mere few to talk about and learn. But for the beginner gardener it is best to explore some of the best ones specified above. You can access many cuttings from friends and farmers markets in this community. Start small so you don't get discouraged, stick these cuttings right in our native soil and maybe mulch them if you like or not. But its fun to see what the like best and how fast they grow here. Keep a watchful eye in this community for more roots projects emerging. The people are here and they are making a big change.