

January 19, 2021
Garden Club of the Upper Keys
Suzy Cushman, Master Gardener



Lavender growing in the UK



Definition:

Any plant with leaves, seeds, or flowers used for flavoring food, medicine, or perfume.

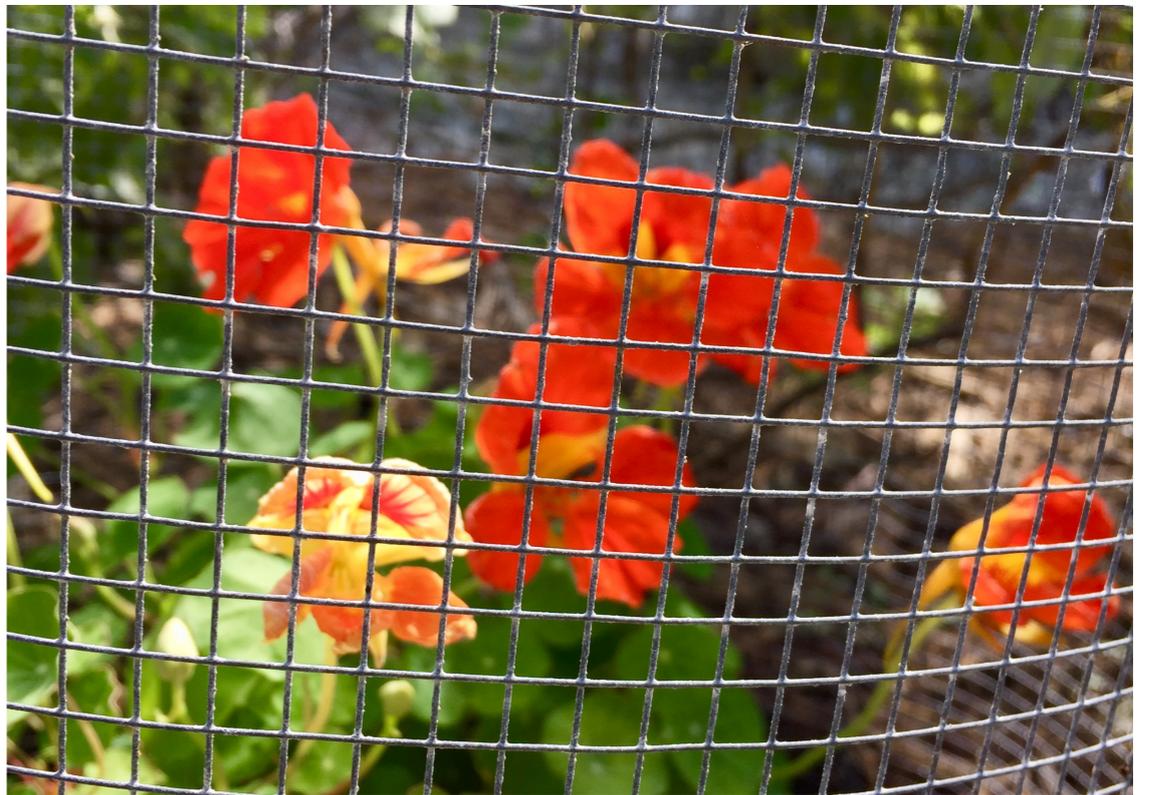
Any seed bearing plant that does not have a woody stem and dies down to the ground after flowering. (Botany)
'The banana plant is the world's largest herb'

Origin:

Middle English via Old French and Latin *herba* (grass, green crops, herb). The word *herb* has always been spelled with an H but it is usually silent in the US. In the UK however the H is pronounced.

Online Oxford Dictionary





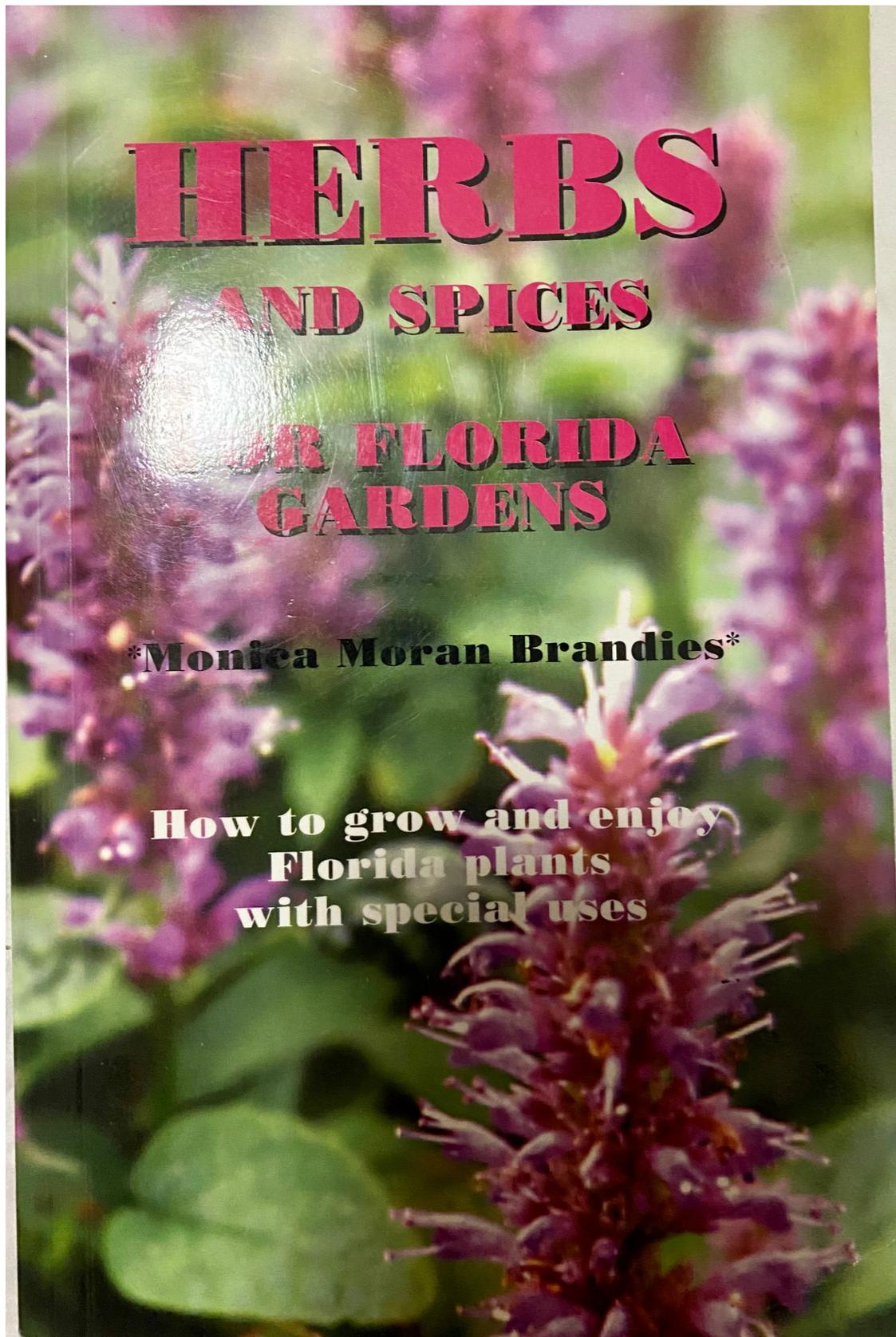


Herb Garden & Bay Tree



- *Herbs and Spices for Florida Gardens* by Monica Moran Brandies
How to grow and enjoy Florida plants with special uses
- This is a good book with lots of information. It has three little sections: north, central and south Florida but also tips on harvesting, using, preserving, and cooking with herbs; a section on edible flowers; a plant-by-plant directory with specific tips for growing herbs in Florida - some herbs I've never heard of; and lists of places that actually sell herbs and botanical gardens that grow them.
- Most herbs are not native to the Florida Keys - but there are native sages and other wild flowers that are worth adding to the herb garden. My personal favorite Coreopsis or tickseed the Florida state wildflower:





Other Pretty Florida Natives

- Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia pulchilla* and *Gaillardia aestivalis* (Lanceleaf Blanketflower))
- *Redbeckias* - Black-eyed Susan
- Blazing Stars - Florida Evergreen Blazing Star can be used in the Keys
- Spotted Beebalm - (*Monarda punctata*)
- *Salvia misella* - Native sage

Key West Cluster Vine or Sky Blue Cluster Vine



Prepare the soil

- Myth - Herbs like bad soil. NO! They **tolerate** poor soil but like any plant, they thrive in good soil
- Retaining moisture in the soil is important - add sand, bio-char, water crystals before planting. However most herbs don't like having wet feet, so good drainage is also necessary
- Use a nutritional drench on young plants and fertilize from time to time

Lettuce and
Chinese cabbage,
lemon sorrel,
leeks, and
nasturtiums



Herbs that do well in Key Largo for me

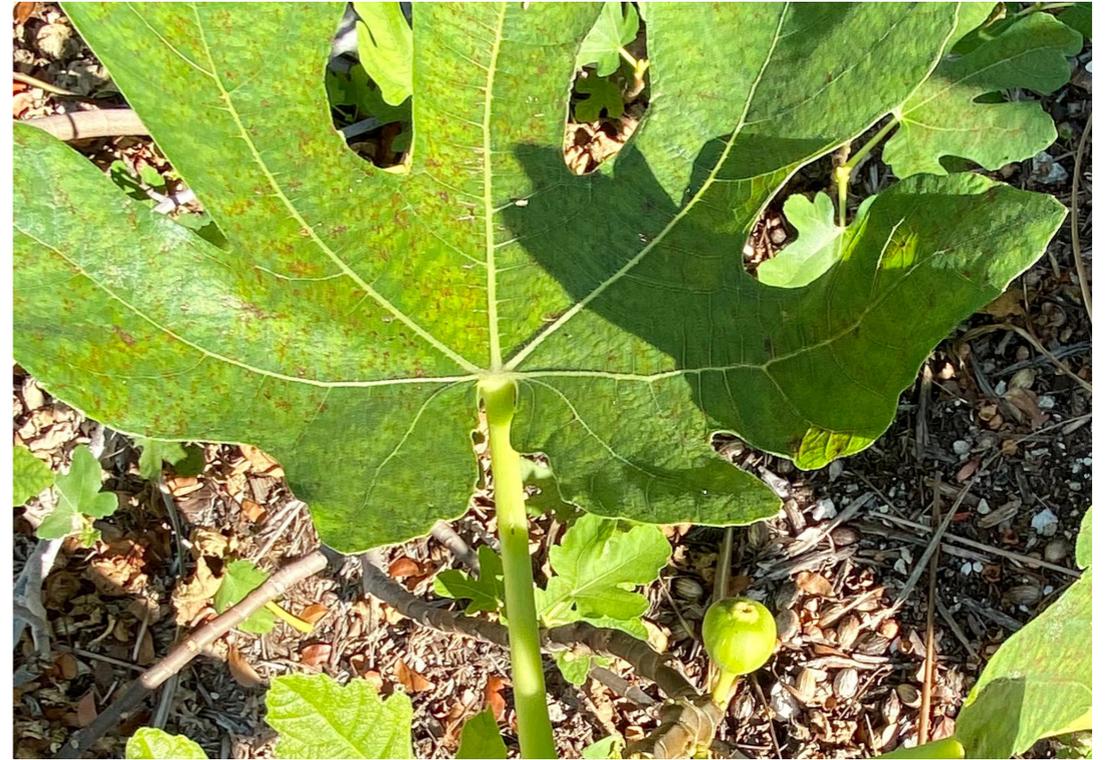
- rosemary - iguanas leave it alone, hates wet feet (legend has it that it only grows well where the woman is strong)
- oregano - iguanas leave it alone, likes a little shade, it fades a little in the summer but comes back in the fall
- basil - I found iguanas would eat the globe basil and leave the Thai basil alone. I believe mine have interbred, and they reseed themselves continually and the iguanas leave them alone. Cut the flowers off from time to time to continue growth (but leave some for the bees).
- Scented Geraniums - I have Attar of Rose and a Rose scented geranium - they are huge and gorgeous - the smell ... divine

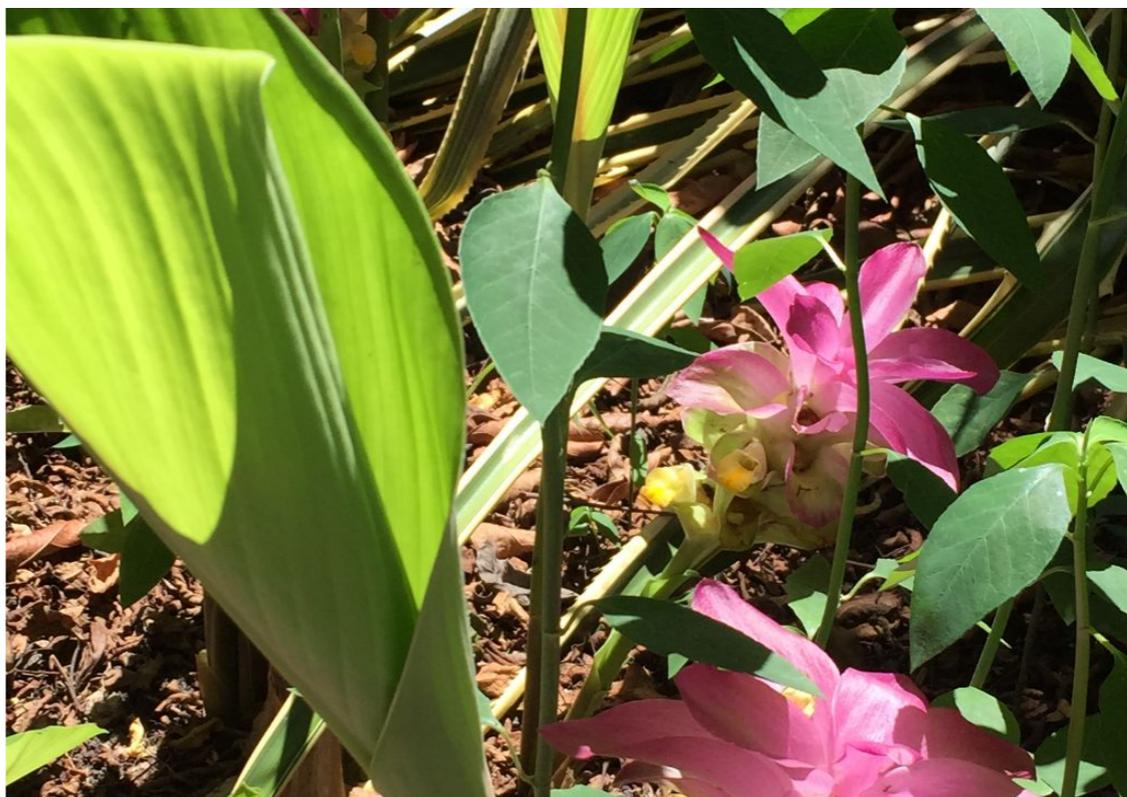
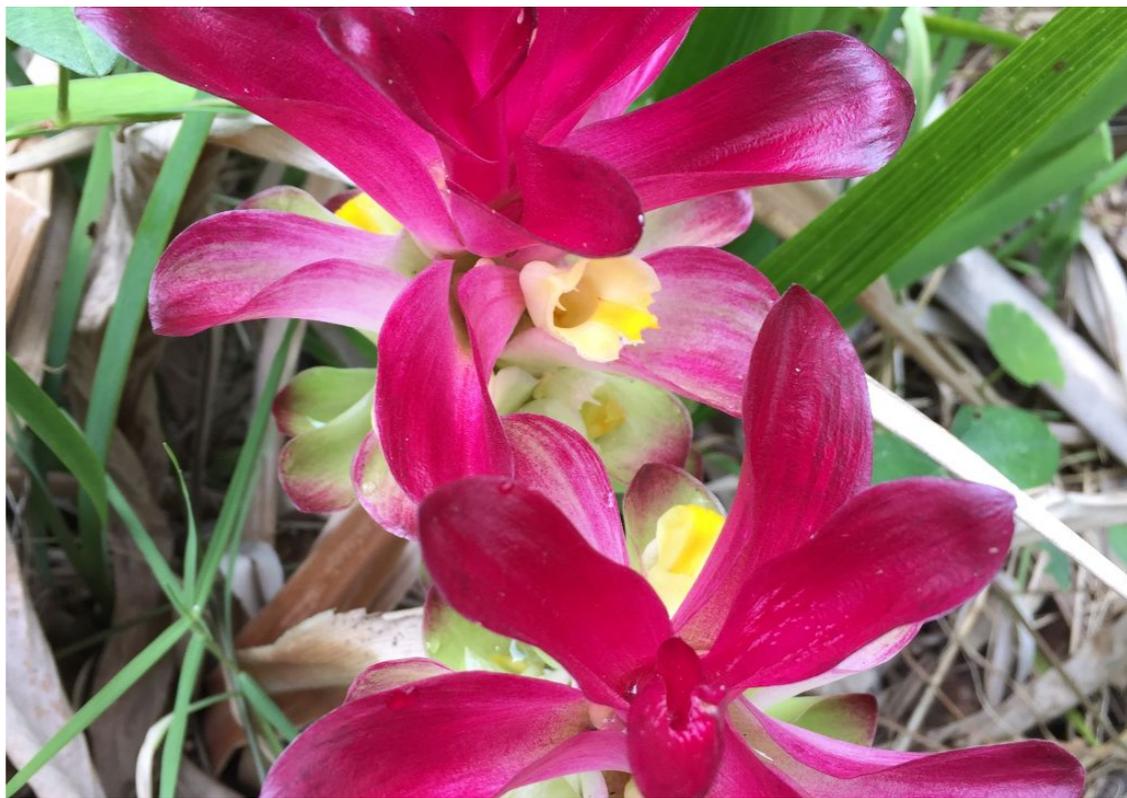


Rosemary Flowers and Soybean Flowers

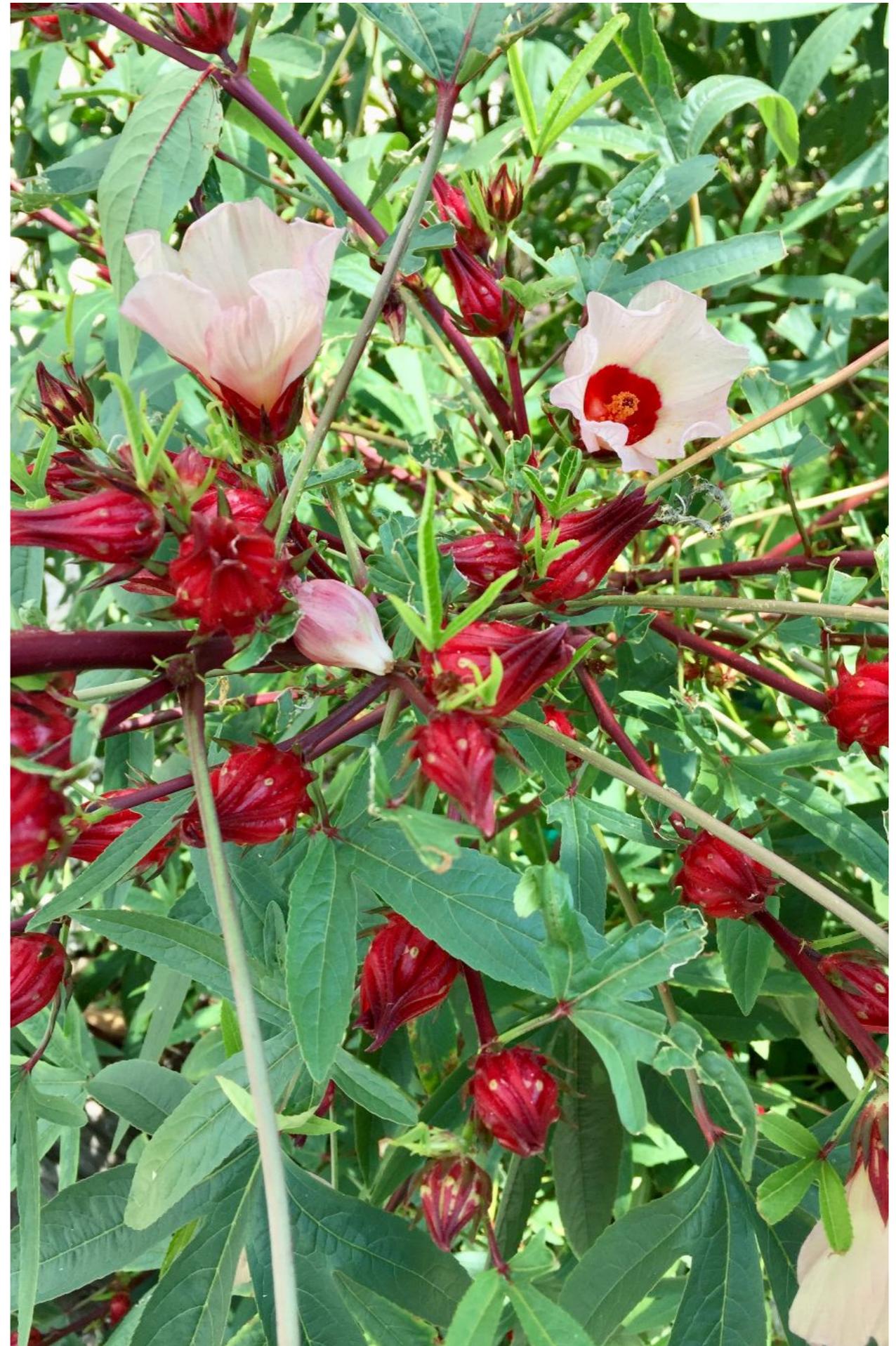
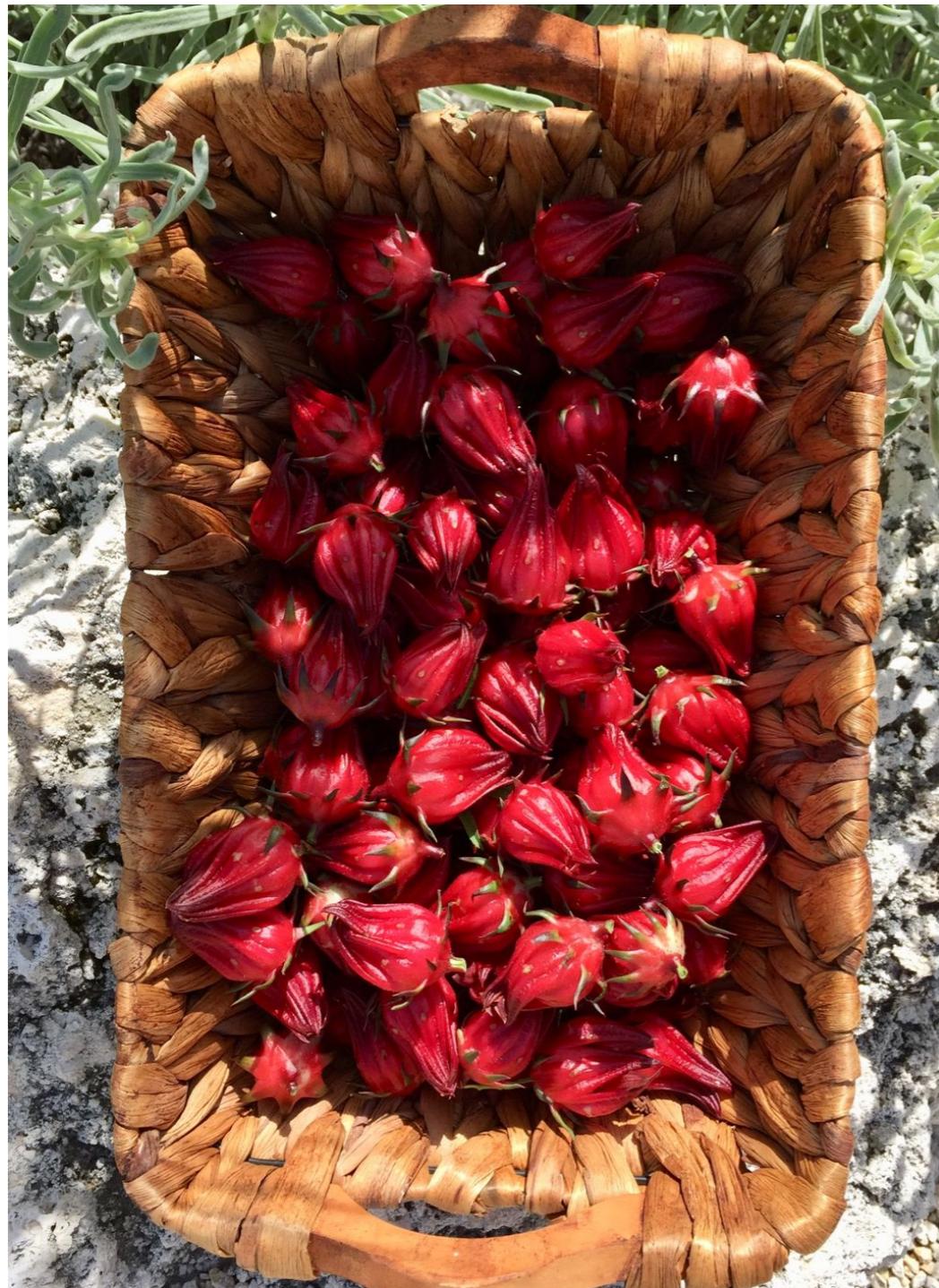


- Arugula has always done well, also reseeds itself - for the first time I notice they've been eaten. I guess the iguanas are desperate. I think they'll survive but I've put a cage on one of them
- Sage and mint will do fine if you can protect them from things that like to eat them. I found a host of tiny hermit crabs on my mint once. They are both in cages now. Sage doesn't want to be wet but it doesn't want to dry out completely either





Roselle - a Hibiscus relative

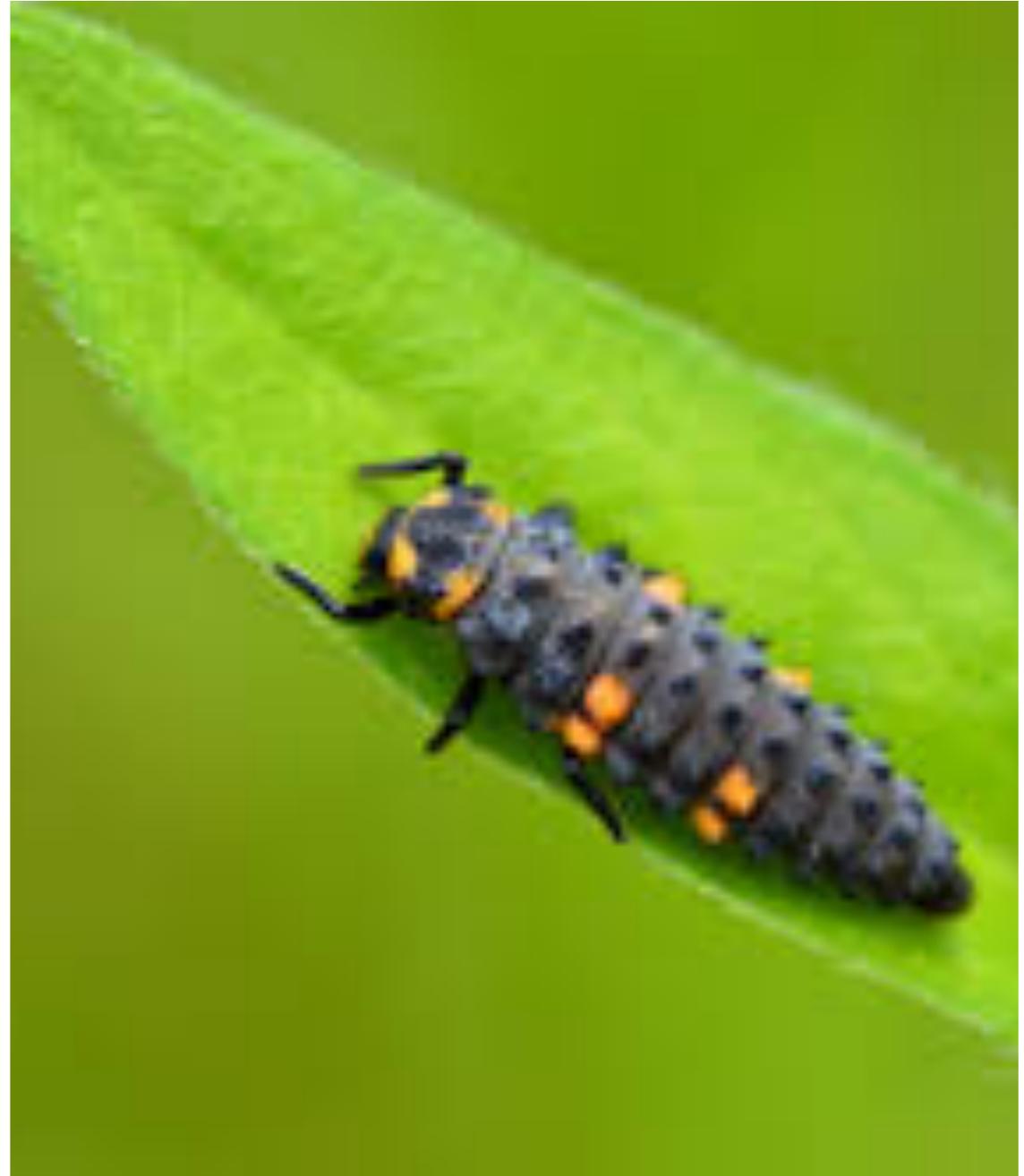


Herbs that Haven't Done Well for Me

- I usually grow my herbs from seeds I've saved from my garden (or let them reseed themselves) believing that local seeds lead to stronger plants. However, in the case of **parsley** I've had better luck buying more mature plants from local stores. Iguanas don't seem to bother these more mature parsley plants, but you do need to look for caterpillars
- Thyme has not done well for me in the Keys, I believe others have had better luck. I'm now trying a more mature specimen
- Chives - again others have had better luck - in Miami Dade I had a huge chive clump that thrived for years. Here, I've been lucky to nurse my seedlings carefully and end up with hardly anything. Again buying a more mature clump might improve my chances

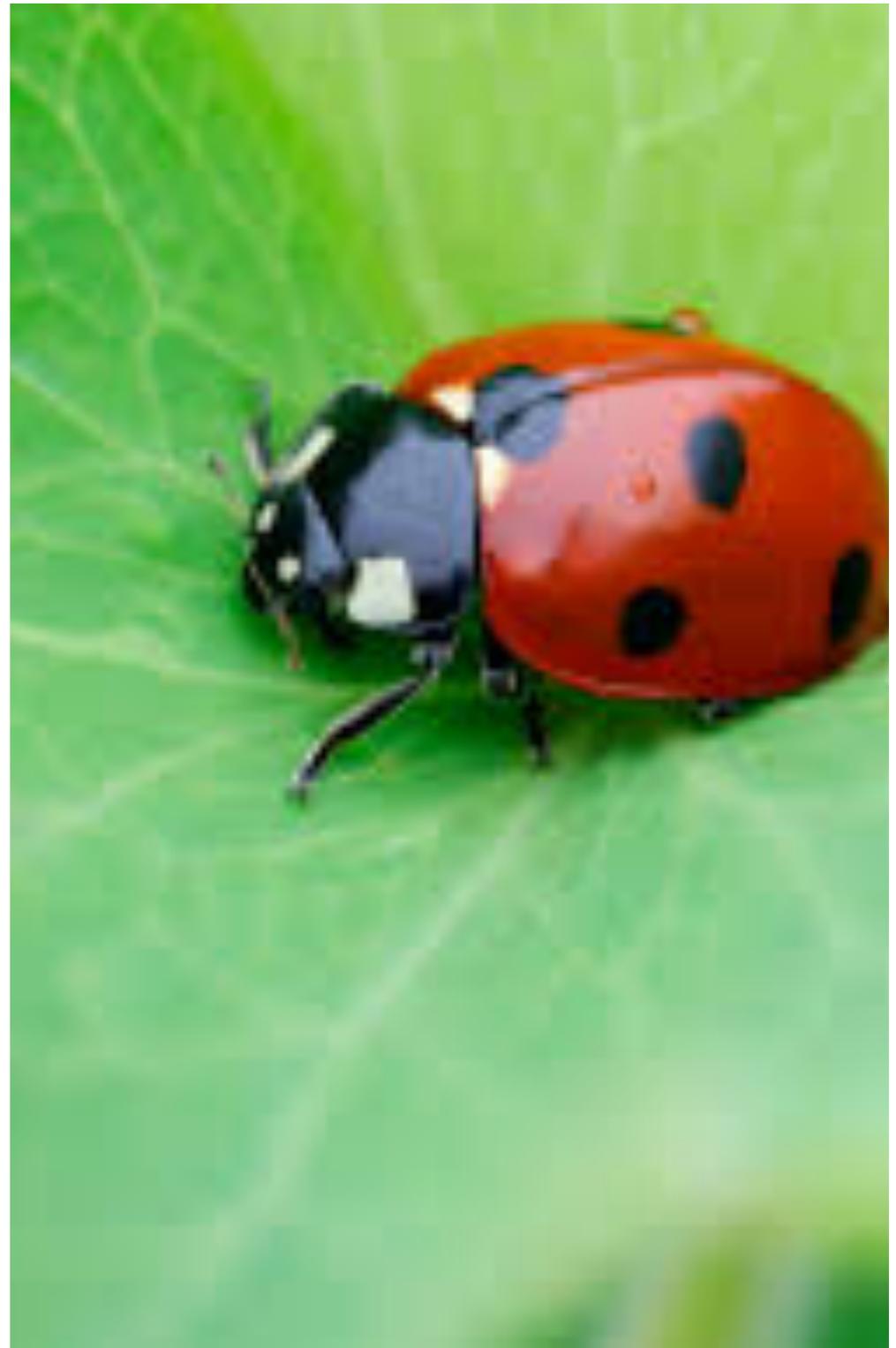
Not Every Bug is a Bad Bug

- Do you know what this?



Ladybugs!

Yes, these pretty little bugs are voracious feeders on all kinds of not such nice bugs that may invade our herbs, and their larvae even more so.



Lady bug eggs & Key Largo Tree Snail



Predatory Stink Bugs



Lacewing eggs & larva



