In Florida’s tropical and sub-tropical climates, plants that are adapted for warm, wet weather thrive. What kind of plants come to mind when you think of Florida? Palm trees, orange trees and colorful flowers such as hibiscus are commonly associated with Florida— and for good reason! These hardy plants are suited for hot weather, lots of rainfall, and exposure to sea salt. Palm trees can weather both excessive moisture and long periods of drought, making them perfect seaside plants. Over a hundred of varieties of oranges enjoy Florida’s sunshine to grow. Colorful and unusual flowers such as hibiscus, crepe myrtle, birds of paradise and orchids dot the landscape making Florida a lush colorful paradise.

Sarasota county is right on the boundary line for hardiness zones. Gardeners keep track of the hardiness zones so they know what plants will survive in that area. Most of Sarasota county is in zone 9b, meaning plants that can withstand temperatures of 25-30 F will survive the winter months. South Florida can take more tropical plants, which wouldn’t survive in the colder North Florida climate.
Florida Sensory Painting

Plants that thrive in Florida have adapted to survive in a tropical and sub-tropical climate. Some plants, such as the cabbage palm, have developed a tolerance for salt water, making them common trees along beaches and waterfront. Other plants have adapted to thrive in sandy soil, such as the live oak tree which sends out a strong root system to keep the large tree in place. Still other plants are adapted to thrive in both wet conditions and drought, such as the slash pine which can withstand both flooding and months without rain.

Materials:
Butcher paper or brown paper bags, cut open
Tempera paint
Pine cones, pine nettles, leaves, citrus peels, flowers, and other nature samples

Process:

1) Gather leaves, pine cones, citrus and other nature samples.
2) Spread butcher paper on a table or the ground. Cutting open brown paper bags, removing the bottom is another good option for a large painting surface.
3) Place a liberal amount of washable tempera paint in a tray or paper plate.
4) Dip the sensory nature samples into the paint and use them to paint, dab or press onto the butcher paper. Explore how the different textures and scents affect the way the paint is applied.
5) You can also try creating impressions of the plants by lightly coating them in paint and pressing them onto a single sheet of paper.