

The Olympic Wreath has a long history that goes back to 776BC in Ancient Greece. The Greek would hold the Olympic Games and would crown the winner with an olive wreath. They took the Olympic Games very seriously because it symbolized victory, status and their achievements. Whomever received the olive wreath became a hero to all the townspeople. The symbol of the Olympic Wreath has influence on many things we do today. It is found on the Olympic Medals, mentioned in literature and as a symbol during the holidays. When I created my own personal wreath, I tried to use native Florida plants that represented victory, status and achievements.

The base of my wreath is made out of Wild Grape vine. The scientific name for the Wild Grape is *Muscadinia rotundifolia*. Wild grapes are used to make different foods like wine, juice and jellies. Wild grapes are high in vitamin C and ellagic acid. They also contain chemicals that have been found to reduce heart disease. Wild grape vines provide cover, browse and food for a wide variety of animals.

Next I used the Passion Flower vine as the green decoration for my wreath. The scientific name for Passion Flower vine is *Passiflora incarnata*. The Passion Flower has a chemical called GABA that lowers the activity in some brain cells and helps people relax. It has been used to treat anxiety, insomnia, seizures, and hysteria. The tiny black bee or Passion Flower Bee, and the Sword-billed Hummingbird used the flower as a food source. The Spanish explorers believed it was a symbol of Christ's last days and his crucifixion.

The needles of the Slash Pine, *Pinus elliotti*, also decorate my wreath. The Slash Pine can grow in a variety of acidic soils and is found throughout the Southeast. Its cones and seeds are a food source for gray and fox squirrels and wild turkey. People use it for lumber and it's by products are often found in cleaning supplies.

In conclusion, the Wild Grape has been found to reduce heart disease. The Passion Flower helps to treat anxiety and the Slash Pine is used in everyday household cleaning products. I used these plants in the construction of my wreath because they symbolize confidence, determination and relaxation.

Spanish Moss - *Tillandsia usneoides*

Slash Pine - *Pinus elliottii*

Passion Flower - *Passiflora incarnata*

Wild Grape - *Muscadinia rotundifolia*

Conservation Message:

We need to protect the Wild Grape because it is very useful in helping the medical field find cures for heart disease.