

PLANT MATERIALS INFORMATION TABLE

Plant Common Name	Plant Scientific Name
1. Live Oak	<i>Quercus virginiana</i>
2. Alexander Palm	<i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i>
3. Coconut Palm	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>
4. Lantana	<i>Lantana depressa</i>
5.	
6.	

In the table below, specify your selected plant and include its one-sentence conservation message.

Plant Common Name	One Sentence Conservation Message
Coconut Palm	Without this major tourist attraction, South Florida's economy would surely spiral downward and out of control.



In the space provided below, please include a 500-word rationale for plant selections.



The plants used for this Olympic wreath were chosen because of their close connections with South Florida. The Coconut Palm was an obvious choice because of its prevalence in South Florida. Without them, the area would not have its tropical appeal, and the tourism industry which fuels its economy would slump. South Florida beaches are famous for their palms; and without them and the multiple uses they have, tourists would certainly see the area as an environmental catastrophe rather than as a sunny wonderland. Coconut Palms are used for their fruit, milk, husks, and shade alike. The coconut water can even be used as an intravenous liquid due to its consistency, sugar, and salt, which make it easily compatible with blood. The coconuts of the Coconut Palm were perfect for use as the five rings of the Olympics. They were cut into circles and placed in the middle of the wreath to demonstrate that the plant diversity within South Florida is important and if any ring or species is eliminated, South Florida ecosystems would be irrevocably harmed.

The Alexander Palm was used for a very similar reason. Although these beautiful palm trees are not as common as the Coconut Palm, they are still very important to the South Florida community. Primarily, they are used for landscaping in suburban yards and businesses. I have several Alexander Palms in my back yard, and had not realized how many other homes had them until I continued to research this fantastic palm species. Now, I notice them every time I drive down the street. This particular plant was used to cover the base of the wreath. Allowing it this position shows the vast diversity of palm life in South Florida. Often, only Coconut and Sabal Palms are remembered and associated with South Florida, but it is important to remember that diversity within the palm family is vast. Although the Coconut and Alexander Palms are similar in appearance, they are two different species.

Lantana depressa was used on the wreath for multiple reasons. Naturally, this beautiful flower is native to Miami-Dade County, and because of its similarities to its cousin, Lantana camara, an invasive species, it is being unnecessarily destroyed. Lantana depressa is now an endangered species. I felt it was important to raise awareness about this flower, which is so vital to the South Florida ecosystem, by including it on the wreath. Aesthetically, the flower relates to the Olympic theme in that its golden flowers are very symbolic of a gold medal, for which the wreath would have been awarded.

Live Oak, which formed the base of the wreath, was appropriate for this position because of its strength. Able to withstand hurricane-force winds, this tree is great for climbing, swinging, hanging ornaments, and other such activities. This tree stands tall and proud in South Florida all year long. It is also used in landscaping, but the government is beginning to regulate its growth. Because they can be used to beautify highways, only certain types of trees—the "prettiest"—are wanted. It is sometimes said that the only way to find a legitimate and free-growing Live Oak is to find one in the wild and uproot it. Any other tree may have been through a selective breeding process which causes it to grow with high reaching branches necessary for keeping it out of the way of traffic. The appearance of the Live Oak also contributed to the wreath in that it gave it the look of an actual Olympic wreath. Because of the size and coloring of Live Oak leaves, the use of the branches as the base contributed to the wreath's fern-like appearance.

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