

Strelitzia spp.

One of the most beautiful and extraordinary flowers grown in Brevard County is the Bird of Paradise, native to South Africa. Closely related to the banana, these herbaceous plants produce flowers which resemble birds in flight, hence their name.

Orange Bird of Paradise

Strelitzia reginae

The most popular is the smaller orange bird which forms a three to five-foot tall clump. Throughout the year, it produces exotic orange and blue flowers. As cut flowers, they are used in arrangements and may last up to two weeks. The evergreen leaves do not shed so they make a welcome addition around pools. This species is also commonly used as a specimen or accent plant in the landscape, in full sun or partial shade. It may also be used in large containers or in mass plantings in an island or berm to create a tropical effect. Salt tolerance is considered only fair, so plants should be protected from salt spray in coastal areas. Although they will briefly tolerate temperatures as low as 24°F, freezing temperatures will damage flowers and buds, so cover them up before a freeze or frost!

White (Giant) Bird of Paradise

Strelitzia nicolai

The white bird grows to 20 feet or more in height. With its large, banana-like leaves and upright clumping stalks, it makes a dramatic and exotic statement in the landscape. The leaves, which can reach four or more feet in length, fan out in opposite directions. Individual sections of the clump often form separate trunks and support the weight of the large arching leaves. During summer

and fall, large white and blue flowers, similar to those of the smaller orange bird though much larger, are produced amid the foliage. The white bird of paradise should only be used in the landscape where there is sufficient room for its height and spread. Ideal locations include areas under the tall canopy of live oaks or in front of large, empty walls. Plants placed in open areas grow well but the leaves tend to shred in strong winds. Also like the orange bird, the giant white tropical may be damaged if temperatures drop below 28°F. Salt tolerance is considered only fair, so plants should be protected from salt spray in coastal areas.

