

PALM PRINTS

The quarterly newsletter for community associations and associated professionals

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FORMOSAN TERMITES AND MULCH FROM LOUISIANA

E-mail rumors warning that Formosan termites from the New Orleans area are being spread to different parts of the U.S. have been flying around. After the Hurricane in New Orleans many trees were blown over. Rumor has it that these trees were then turned into mulch and the state is trying to get rid of tons of this mulch to anyone who will come and haul it away. And presumably it will be showing up in Home Depot and Lowes with one huge problem; Formosan Termites will be the bonus in those bags.

In the opinion of termite specialists at the University of Florida, however, the greater risk from termites is to structures from termites already established in your yard as opposed to any termite stragglers that may be brought in on bags of mulch. Termites can be found in mulch, but their survival is poor. The ability of the termites to survive the chipping process to create mulch is not good; additionally, once separated from the colony, their ability to survive further decreases. Finally, even when termites are found in mulch, mulch-fed termites suffer significantly lower survivorship.

As of this writing, the number one method of spreading the Formosan subterranean termite is infested railroad ties. The number two method of spreading the Formosan subterranean termite is infested utility poles. The

greater problem is associated with the transport of large chunks of wood containing enough termites to sustain reproductive forms. Infested railroad ties and salvaged timbers from razed structures are known to be associated with the spread of the Formosan subterranean termite.

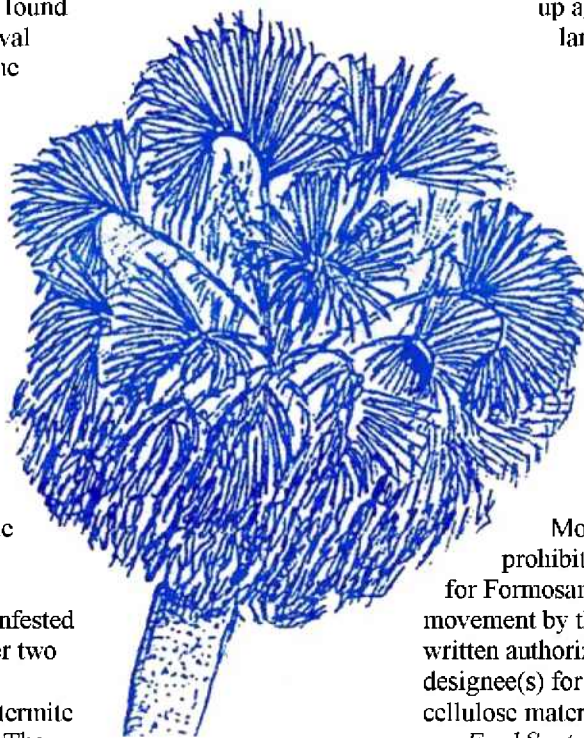
Termite researchers believe that mulch does contribute to termite infestations, but not because invasive species are spread with it. Mulch increases the ability of termites to survive where they are already established by keeping the soil moist and temperatures moderate. Mulch laid too thickly (>4-6 inches) can also allow termites to cross from landscape to house and avoid contact with soil treated with termiticides.

Mulch is useful in keeping mud from splashing up against a house. If mulch is part of your landscape, termite specialists recommend a thin layer (<2 inches) of mulch be placed within 12 inches of the foundation to allow the soil beneath to naturally dry. Desiccation is the termite's worst enemy. Also avoid watering next to foundation walls.

The [Formosan subterranean termite](#) has long been recognized as a serious problem in southern Louisiana, so serious in fact that in October 2005 the state's Department of Agriculture and Forestry imposed quarantine on all wood debris from parishes affected by Hurricane Katrina. Provisions of the quarantine include:

Movement of wood or cellulose material is prohibited unless either (1) it is fumigated or treated for Formosan subterranean termites and is approved for movement by the commissioner or his designee(s) or (2) written authorization is given by the commissioner or his designee(s) for the movement of untreated wood or cellulose material from the quarantined parishes.

Fred Santana PhD., IPM Coordinator, Sarasota County





Psychotria nervosa Wild Coffee

This evergreen shrub is related to the true coffee plants but not used commercially as a beverage. Wild Coffee is characterized by large, elliptical leaves with notably indented veins that give the leaves a wrinkled appearance. Clusters of small, white flowers are followed by clusters of elliptical, 1/3 inch-long, bright red fruit. The flowers appear throughout the year but are most abundant in the spring. They



attract butterflies, such as the zebra longwing, but also a host of other pollinators. The fruits ripen mostly in the late fall and winter and are eaten by bluejays, cardinals and catbirds. This upright, multi-stemmed shrub may be used in mixed or single-species shrub beds, as an informal hedge, or as a specimen plant in filtered light or even dense shade. When planted in the right place, Wild Coffee will form a perfectly rounded shrub, as can be seen in the center of the picture on the left. This plant at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens has not been pruned! The soft foliage makes it ideal plant for plantings close to walkways as it is passersby-friendly. Plantings of Wild Coffee are able to trap fallen leaves and other debris and this “auto-mulching” further reduces maintenance. Wild Coffee prefers moderately drained, neutral to slightly alkaline (pH of 7.0 or higher) soils, with only small amounts of organic matter. It has medium salt- and drought-tolerance. The typical height of Wild Coffee is about 5 feet but under the right conditions, and in the absence of freezes, Wild Coffee can reach a height of about 12 feet. Its native range is the coastal and tropical hammocks from North-central Florida southward. Two other species of *Psychotria* occur naturally in Florida. Bahama Wild Coffee (*Psychotria ligustrifolia*) is a rare plant that occurs in the pinelands and rocky hammocks of Florida’s southern most tip, while Softleaf Wild Coffee (*Psychotria sulzneri*) is fairly common in the central and southern Florida peninsula. .

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Scientific name: *Psychotria nervosa*
Pronunciation: sy-KO-tree-uh nir-VO-suh
Common name(s): Wild Coffee
Family: Rubiaceae
Origin: C. to S. Florida and West Indies

Editor’s Notes

Congratulations to Julie Whitney and Peter Price from Calusa Lakes! They will receive a Sarasota County Conservation Award, the Community Initiative Award, in April.

Julie and Peter have made it their mission to restore preserve areas in the Calusa Lakes homeowners association by systematically removing invasive exotic trees, especially Brazilian pepper trees, and replacing them with appropriate native plants. They have also worked with the American Littoral Society, the Venetian Waterway, Master Gardeners and Historic Spanish Point to remove invasive exotic plants from Sarasota county areas such as Casperson and Nokomis beaches, Palmer Point, the Venetian Waterway and Spanish Point.

Julie and Peter coordinate the Calusa Lakes neighborhood work team that meets once a month

(from October through May) to remove exotic invasive plant species from in and around about 8 major preserve and lake areas. The team also monitors for and removes invasive exotic plant seedlings.

In 2003, Julie and Peter applied for and received a Sarasota County Neighborhood Grant to remove oleanders and replace them with Florida-friendly plants, largely native, at the front entrance of the Calusa Lakes development. The community’s match was in volunteer hours used to remove invasive exotic plants, mainly Brazilian peppers, from the community’s public preserve and lake areas.

Since 2003, the two have written and received two more Sarasota County Neighborhood Grants and one Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Grant to allow the neighborhood team to continue to remove invasive exotic plants and restore the areas with native plants. In addition, they have written another Sarasota County

Neighborhood Grant and two Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Grants which are still pending. The grants help pay for the hauling of the biomass to county dumps, the native plants and their installation, and with the larger trees, professional tree services to remove them. The work team has worked 1,185 volunteer hours for these efforts.

Removing invasive exotic plants and restoring natural habitats to their former glory is an overwhelming and daunting task. Through their determination and enthusiasm, Julie and Peter have generated an enormous amount of enthusiasm of not only their work team but the entire neighborhood association. In addition, their latest undertaking also involves the community next door, taking their efforts to yet another level. These grassroots efforts not only have an enormous environmental impact but also contribute greatly to community building!

*Annemarie Post, Program Coordinator
 Florida Yards and Neighborhoods
 Community Associations and Residential*

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

For classes held at the **Florida House** (4600 Beneva Rd. South, Sarasota), please call 316-1200; for classes held at **Shamrock Park** (3900 W. Shamrock Dr., Venice), please call 486-2706 or 861-9900; and for classes held at **Twin Lakes** (6700 Clark Rd., Sarasota), please call 861-9900. All programs are **FREE**, but registration is required.

April 4, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., Florida House: Hurricane Shutter Class

Learn about the different types of hurricane shuttering systems and their benefits. See the various types of systems available on the market that can protect your home.

April 4, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m., Shamrock Park: Poisonous Plants

A small number of plants in cultivation in Florida is poisonous to humans and other animals. The purpose of this program is to introduce selected poisonous plants.

April 11, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m., Florida House: Solar Pool Heating – Roof and Deck

Mr. Greenlaw will be discussing proper sizing and installation of solar pool heaters, and Mr. Ross will provide information about various pool decking options.

April 12, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., Twin Lakes Park: Palms in the Landscape

Palms are prized for their unique architecture, the intricate form of their leaves and stems, and their durability. Learn about these fascinating plants and how to care for them.

April 18, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m., Shamrock Park: Stinging Insects

Dr Santana will discuss the affect of the wasp and bee venom and will also discuss the types of bees and wasps that present the greatest threat, including the Africanized bees.

April 19, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m., Twin Lakes Park: Let's Talk about Health and Stroke

The American Heart Association calls for women to take charge of their health and live stronger, healthier lives. This program will explain ways to reduce risk factors.

April 25, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m., Florida House: Landscaping for Wildlife

Urban areas are a dominant feature in the landscape. Learn what you can do in your own yard to create and save wildlife habitat in urban areas.

May 2, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., Shamrock Park: Growing Tropical Fruits

One of the great pleasures for visitors to the tropics or subtropics is the wide array of fruits that is available. This program will introduce some tropical fruits that can be grown here.

May 9, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., Florida House: Citrus in the Urban Landscape

Learn how to grow citrus in Sarasota County. This program will discuss pest and problem identification as well as the nutritional requirements for growing citrus.

May 10, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Twin Lakes Park: Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Workshop for Neighborhood Grant Applicants and Others.

This program will offer practical information on how to design a Florida-friendly landscape, with an emphasis on the Neighborhood Grant requirements.

May 10, 10:00 -11:00 a.m., Twin Lakes Park: What to Do with Your Tropical Bounty.

Excite your taste buds! Tropical vegetables are an excellent nutritious replacement for more familiar vegetables offering new taste sensations.

May 16, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., Florida House: Mosquitoes!

National Geographic recently ranked mosquitoes as **THE** most dangerous creatures on the planet. Find out why, and what you can do about them.

May 16, 2:00 – 3:00 pm., Shamrock Park: What to Do with Your Tropical Bounty

Excite your taste buds! Tropical vegetables are an excellent nutritious replacement for more familiar vegetables offering new taste sensations and easy preparation as well.

May 17, 4:00 – 5:00 pm., Twin Lakes Park: Poisonous Plants

A small number of plants in cultivation in Florida is poisonous to humans and other animals. The purpose of this program is to introduce selected poisonous plants.

May 24, 10:00 – 11:00, Twin Lakes Park: Hurricane Preparedness - Indoors

Emergencies and disasters can strike quickly and without warning and force you to evacuate or confine you to your home. Learn the steps you can take.

May 30, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., Florida House: Trash

This "How-to Guide" for residential solid waste will answer such questions as "How do I prepare yard waste for collection" and "Whom do I call for appliance pick-up."

June 14, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Twin Lakes Park: Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Workshop for Neighborhood Grant Applicants and Others.

This program will offer practical information on how to design a Florida-friendly landscape, with an emphasis on the Neighborhood Grant requirements.

The Neighborhood Grant Program

Workshops for Grant Cycle VIII will start in April This great program provides funds for resident and community associations located in Sarasota County to help improve the quality of life in their areas. Maximum \$12,000 can be awarded to participants. The Grant Goals are: Enhance Safety (signs for neighborhood watch programs, etc.), Preserve Character and Value (landscaping public rights-of-way or medians, entrances, and **removal of non-native invasive plants**), Build Neighborhood Leadership (cost associated with organizational and educational events, etc.), and Enhance Health (trails, bike paths, improvements to the environment, etc.). The Grant will only fund landscaping projects that conform to **Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FY&N) Principles**. For more information about this program, contact Rochelle Brassard at rbrassar@scgov.net or 941.861.5415. For information about FY&N principles, please contact Annemarie Post at apost@scgov.net.

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