



PALM PRINTS

The quarterly newsletter for community associations and associated professionals

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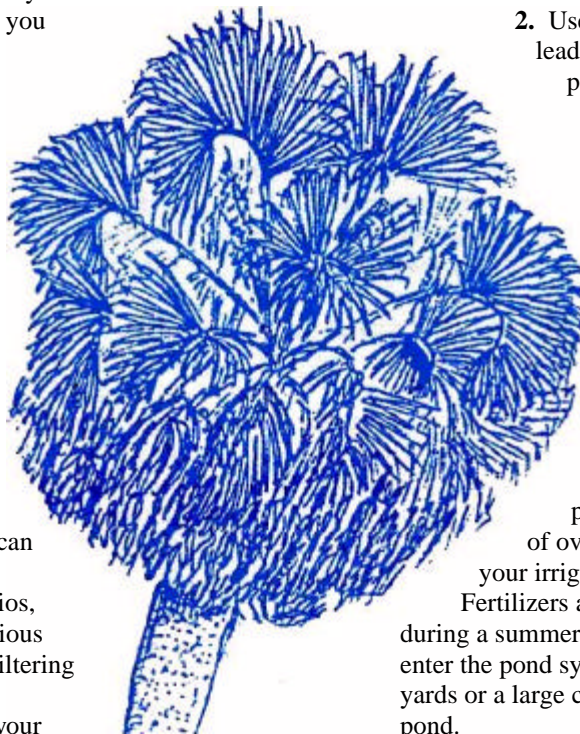
July-September 2006

Stormwater Ponds

Stormwater ponds are specifically designed to decrease downstream flooding and remove pollutants from the water before it enters a lake, river, bay, or before it moves into the aquifer. For stormwater ponds to do their job effectively, they must be managed properly. Managing stormwater ponds begins with management of the pond's watershed, which contributes to the water that flows into the pond. Preventing pollutants from entering a pond is much easier and cheaper than continually cleaning out a pond.

If you live on a pond, consider incorporating a waterscape into the design of your backyard. Let native aquatic plants and shoreline plants add color and beauty to your garden. Picking the right plant for the right spot will result in less fertilizer, pesticide and water use. However, before you can choose the right plant, you have to know something about the site conditions. The area near the house may be high and dry, while the area closer to the pond may be wet. In order to regain some of the filtering action that existed before construction, we can plant trees. Trees slow rainwater before it hits the ground and tree roots help slow the flow by holding the water, allowing it to be absorbed by the soil. We can also use permeable paving surfaces, such as brick patios, mulch pathways, and pervious concrete to help increase filtering action.

How you take care of your yard is very important. If your



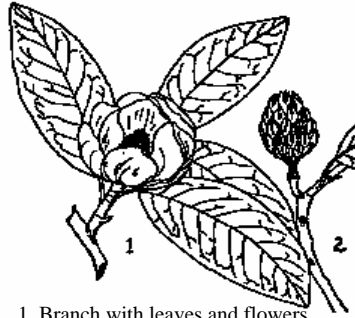
pond is surrounded by lawn grass you can create a 15 to 30 foot buffer zone that receives no fertilizers or pesticides. Backyards on ponds often slope significantly down from the house. When you apply fertilizer to the upland area, gravity will cause some of the nutrients to move down the slope and will benefit the grass area closer to the pond. Take care of your yard in a Florida-friendly way. We often make our yards more high-maintenance than they need to be. The following four steps will give you an attractive healthy lawn and will also help keep your pond healthy.

1. Mow your grass at the proper height (3-4 inches for St. Augustine grass). Longer grass blades will result in better root systems and a good root system will make the plant more efficient in taking up water. Also, longer grass will inhibit weeds.
 2. Use fertilizers appropriately. Over-fertilizing leads to excess plant growth, this can attract plant pests and requires additional maintenance. Only use slow-release fertilizers to avoid leaching of nitrogen. Too much nitrogen also encourages chinch bugs in St. Augustine lawns.
 3. Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Identify the pest and protect the good bugs. Only treat the area of infestation and not the whole lawn if there is a pest problem. Try the least toxic pesticide first and tolerate some plant damage.
 4. Water wisely. Over-watering leads to a lot of problems for our lawns and plants. Fungus problems are a direct result of over-watering. Use a rain shut-off device on your irrigation system!
- Fertilizers and pesticides washing off our lawns during a summer rain also become pollutants when they enter the pond system. The stormwater runoff from many yards or a large community can add a lot of pollutants to a pond.

Annemarie Post



Shaded area represents range



1. Branch with leaves and flowers
2. Twig with a fruit



Mature Sweetbay Magnolia

Magnolia virginiana SWEETBAY MAGNOLIA

Sweetbay Magnolia occurs throughout the state in moist habitats except the Florida Keys. Although it naturally occurs in moist soil habitats, it is adaptable to drier sites in cultivation. Sweetbay can be used as a specimen tree or to provide vertical definition in a group of trees and shrubs. It is a graceful, columnar tree with a smooth whitish bark and it can grow to a mature height of about 60 feet. The elliptical, evergreen leaves have a bay-like fragrance when crushed. The undersides of the leaves are silvery which makes the tree glimmer in a breeze. Showy, creamy-white, lemon-scented flowers appear from June through September. Small red seeds that are eaten by birds and other wildlife follow the flowers. Sweetbay also serves as a larval food plant for Tiger Swallowtail butterflies.

Sweetbay is an excellent tree for planting next to buildings, in narrow alleys or corridors, or in other urban areas with limited space for horizontal crown expansion.

It has not been planted extensively in urban areas, but its flood tolerance, drought tolerance, and narrow crown make it a good candidate. It usually maintains a good straight leader, although occasionally branches are produced close to the ground forming a round multi-stemmed spreading tree. It grows in partial shade or full sun and prefers acid sandy soils. Sweetbay is not tolerant of salt water inundation or salt spray. For more information on this and other trees, visit this website:

<http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees>, where fact sheets of more than 600 trees can be found.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Scientific name: *Magnolia virginiana*

Pronunciation: mag-NO-lee-uh ver-jin-ee-AY-nuh

Common name(s): Sweetbay Magnolia, Swamp Magnolia

Family: Magnoliaceae

Origin: native to North America

EDITOR'S NOTES

Cycle VIII of the **Neighborhood Grant Program** has started and workshops will be held at the North Port Library on July 8 at 2:00 pm and at the Sarasota County Administration Building on Ringling Blvd. on July 12 at 2:00 pm. This great program provides funds for resident and community associations located in Sarasota County to help them improve the quality of life in their areas. For more information about this program and to register for workshops contact Rochelle Brassard at 861-5415 or rbrassar@scgov.net. A maximum of \$12,000 can be awarded to participants. For every dollar the County contributes, the neighborhood or community association will have to contribute a like amount. This may be cash, donated goods or services by local businesses, or volunteer time. The Grant Goals are: Enhance Safety (signs for neighborhood watch programs etc.), Preserve Character and Value (landscaping public rights-of-way or medians, entrances etc.), 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 and Neighborhoods Principles** and conserve water. A Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Workshop that will provide practical information for Grant applicants has been scheduled for July 13 at 4:00 pm. Please call 861-9900 to register. The deadline for grant applications for Grant Cycle VIII is August 14.

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CALENDAR

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. Also see the calendar on our website: <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>.

Twin Lakes Park: July 12, 10:00 am – Hurricane Preparedness for the Home

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning and force you to evacuate or confine you to your home. Mary Jo Oswald (Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Sarasota County Extension) will teach you how you can cope by preparing in advance. Learn the steps you can take and how to assemble a disaster supplies kit.

Twin Lakes Park: July 12, 1:00 pm – Termites

You will probably have termites in your home if you live in Florida long enough. Dr. Fred Santana (IPM Coordinator, Sarasota County) will discuss basic termite biology and behavior, their impact on homes, various approaches that are now available to control them, and steps you can take to discourage their presence.

Shamrock Park: July 13, 2:00 pm – Ants in and Around the Home

Dr. Fred Santana (IPM Coordinator, Sarasota County) will talk about ants that are frequently encountered in your homes and yards. Learn some of their characteristics, habits and behaviors, and ways to control them with the least toxic pesticide materials.

Twin Lakes Park: July 13, 4:00 pm – Florida Yards and Neighborhoods

Workshop. Annemarie Post (Program Coordinator, Sarasota County Extension) will discuss how adapting environmentally friendly landscape practices can play an important role in minimizing the potential harmful effects of urbanization on natural resources. Practical information will be provided for Neighborhood Grant applicants.

Twin Lakes Park: July 19, 10:00 am – Florida-friendly Landscaping

As our communities have grown, there has been tremendous pressure placed upon our natural resources. Learn from Annemarie Post (Program Coordinator, Sarasota County Extension) how you can play a role in minimizing the potential harmful effects on our resources by adapting environmentally friendly landscape maintenance practices.

Shamrock Park: July 20, 2:00 pm – Florida-friendly Landscaping

As our communities have grown, there has been tremendous pressure placed upon our natural resources. Learn from Annemarie Post (Program Coordinator, Sarasota County Extension) how you can play a role in minimizing the potential harmful effects on our resources by adapting environmentally friendly landscape maintenance practices.

Twin Lakes Park: August 2, 1:00 pm – Pests In and Around the Home

Dr. Fred Santana (IPM Coordinator, Sarasota County) will talk about common pests that live and reproduce inside structures, or that occasionally invade home from the outside. This program will also talk about ways to control them.

Shamrock Park: August 3, 2:00 pm – Native Plants for Home Landscapes

Home landscapes often have unique conditions that make landscaping a challenge. Learn about plants that will yield a more successful landscape and learn how to recognize the plants you may encounter while visiting natural areas from Annemarie Post (Program Coordinator, Sarasota County Extension).

Twin Lakes Park: August 16, 10:00 am – Hurricane Preparedness for the Home

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning and force you to evacuate or confine you to your home. Mary Jo Oswald (Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Sarasota County Extension) will teach you how you can cope by preparing in advance. Learn the steps you can take and how to assemble a disaster supplies kit.

Twin Lakes Park: August 16, 1:00 pm – Africanized Honeybees

These bees have gained a foothold in Florida and pose a serious long-term risk to the people of this state. Fred Santana (IPM Coordinator, Sarasota County) will give information about the history, distribution and behavior of Africanized honeybees, along with measures that are taken to avoid and control nests and swarms.

Shamrock Park: August 17, 2:00 pm – Pests In and Around the Home

Dr. Fred Santana (IPM Coordinator, Sarasota County) will talk about common pests that live and reproduce inside structures, or that occasionally invade home from the outside. This program will also talk about ways to control them.

Alternative Mulches

Recycled Yard Waste

Mulch made by Sarasota county from recycled plant debris is free. To locate your closest source, call the landfill at 861-1570.

Eucalyptus mulch

Produced from plantation-grown trees, this mulch is a natural insect-repellant with a rich, long-lasting color.

Pine Bark

This is excellent mulch with long-lasting color. It is often cheaper than purchased pine straw.

Pine Straw

Available commercially by the bale, or free if you rake it yourself (fallen leaves, especially **oak leaves**, make great mulch too).

Melaleuca mulch

Melaleuca, or punk tree, is an invasive non-native tree that has taken over 500,000 acres of the Florida Everglades. Turning this tree into mulch helps rid the state of this terrible pest plant. It is extremely long lasting and termite-resistant.

Promulch

Made from rubber tires, this mulch should not be used in planting beds but only playgrounds. It stays in place, comes in different colors, and does not emit toxin.

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Palm Prints

What is Blooming at the Florida House?

Finally, the rainy season has begun and our afternoon showers are a welcome relief from the long drought we've experienced. Even the drought-tolerant plants at Florida House have suffered. Their growth has been curtailed and for some, their normal profusion of flowers has been missing or delayed. One plant that marks summer with a prolific display of flowers is crape myrtle. There are three hybrids at Florida House, Acoma, Sioux and Tonto. These are three of the cultivars released by the U.S. National Arboretum with names coined for Indian tribes. These new hybrids are far superior to the parents in resistance to powdery mildew, flower colors, fall foliage colors, and bark characteristics. Soon

Acoma's cascading white flowers will be flowing over the bench beneath it, the dark red blossoms of Tonto will give additional color to the wildflower meadow, but the real beauty waits inside as the profuse pink blooms of the Sioux almost reach the earth with their weighted beauty.

Flowers in bloom now:

African bush daisy, African iris, beach buttercup, beach sunflower, blue daze, coral honeysuckle, Crinum lily, cross vine, firecracker plant, Gaillardia, gloriosa lily, goldenrod, indigo spires sage, Jacquemontia, jewels of Opar, Lantana, Louis Philippe rose, Mexican sunflower, Mimosa, passion vine, Pentas, perennial peanut, pickerelweed, pineland Heliotrope, pink and scarlet sage, purple heart, scorpion-tail,

society garlic, spiderwort, Tampa vervain, walking Iris, and water lily.

Shrubs in bloom now:

Tibochina, Bougainvillea, Cassia, firebush, fiddlewood, Florida privet, golden dewdrop, natal plum, Plumbagos, porterweed, rouge plant, saw palmetto, Texas sage, Vitex, and wild coffee.

Trees in bloom now:

Crape myrtles, Jatropha, Magnolia, orange jasmine, and white Cordia.

Plants blooming and/or setting fruit:

Bananas, citrus, lychee, mango, miracle fruit, and papaya.

Patricia Porchey, Horticulturist

Firebush (*Hamelia patens*)

