

# PALM PRINTS

The quarterly newsletter for community associations and associated professionals

Vol. 8, No 2.

October - December 2008

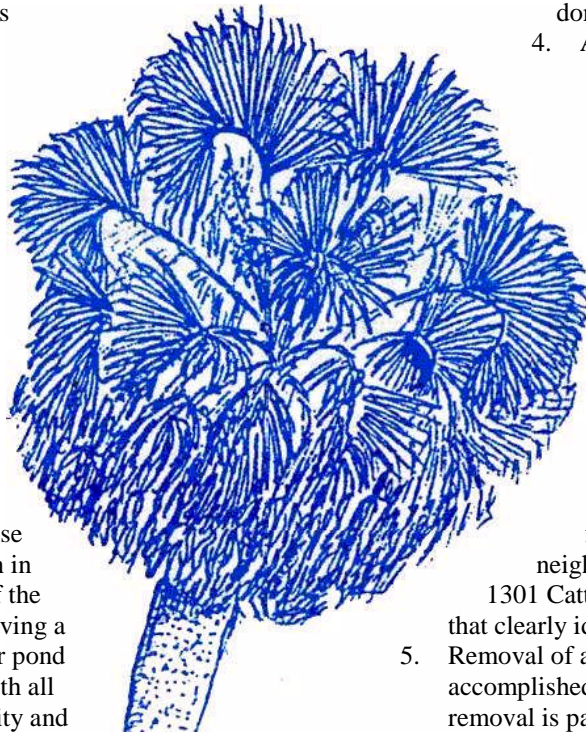
## Practical Maintenance Guidelines for Stormwater Ponds

The purpose of the stormwater pond is to remove pollutants before they are transported to natural lakes, rivers and streams. They will never be pristine swimming or fishing lakes (i.e.) clear of vegetation or phytoplankton) because their purpose is to trap and transform pollutants before water is transported downstream. Some algae and plants that homeowners sometimes find objectionable help provide this pollution removal function.

Stormwater ponds need to be cleaned out periodically (about every 25 years) to keep them functioning properly. However, some things can be done in the pond and the watershed to improve water quality and extend the periods between extensive maintenance efforts.

An efficient functioning stormwater system takes as much time and effort as maintaining the rest of the landscape. In fact, highly maintained upland landscaping is a big part of the problem in keeping stormwater systems attractive.

Many homeowners do not connect their landscape design and maintenance practices to the problem in their stormwater ponds. Highly maintained lawns and direct discharge of stormwater into ponds cause much of the weedy growth in stormwater ponds. One of the most important steps in having a more attractive stormwater pond is to form a partnership with all the people in the community and then learn as much as possible about your particular pond. If you use a company for pond



maintenance, please make sure to include them.






1. Remove debris especially at the inflow and outflow of ponds and give special attention to drains and drop boxes. This will reduce the amount of pollutants that the pond will have to remove.
2. Inspect the entire stormwater system on an annual or semiannual basis and make brief inspection trips after each storm. Cleaning up debris is an important part of the inspection. Leaves, limbs and other debris should be removed from the conveyance system. Establishing a buffer or no-mow zone and making sure the exhaust of your mower is not directed towards the pond will help keep grass cuttings out of the pond.
  3. Keep records of all maintenance needs plus work done on the pond.
  4. A permanent open water pool that never goes dry helps in sedimentation of pollutants and mosquito control. The permanent pool water should contain adequate amounts of dissolved oxygen. If this is a particular problem then perhaps an aeration device can be added. Also, at least one third of the pond should be maintained as a shallow littoral shelf with desirable plant species to remove dissolved pollutants. For more information about littoral zones please contact Sarasota County Resource Protection at 861-6113. To find out where littoral zones exist in your neighborhood, you can visit their office at 1301 Cattlemen Rd. and view construction plans that clearly identify these zones.
5. Removal of algae and nuisance plant species can be accomplished by rakes or hand pulling. If plant removal is part of the plan developed for your lake, obtain advice from your water management district (SWFWMD), Sarasota County Resource Protection and your pond management company.

# Wildlife Habitat Creation In and Around Urban Ponds

Stormwater ponds are a permanent fixture on much of Florida's landscape. Without them, Florida would not be able to support its growing population safely or efficiently. They are found in most developments and can be esthetically pleasing and add value and curb appeal to homes and properties. Wetland plants reduce the amount of contamination that reaches the groundwater and produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide (greenhouse gas). They also improve water quality by removing components of fertilizers such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which helps to control algae blooms. The green plants serve as primary food producers for plant-eating (herbivorous) animals, who in turn become food for flesh-eating (carnivorous) animals. In addition, wetland plants increase much-needed wildlife habitat in the urban landscape by providing a seed source and foraging areas for waterfowl and wading birds and a safe haven for small fish and other aquatic life.

Since native plants are adapted to local environments, such as seasonal change in water level, and provide the best overall food source for wildlife and thus support many wildlife species, they work best. Native plants are also typically easier to maintain than non-native species and require little or no extra water or fertilizer once established. In addition, local ordinances often require the use of native plants. Wetland plants are usually divided into three main categories:



Marginal	Marginal	Emergent aquatic	Emergent aquatic	Floating
Above +1.5'	+1.5' to +0.5'	+0.5' to -0.5'	-0.5' to -3.0'	-3.0' to -5.0'
				
Red Maple ( <i>Acer rubrum</i> )	St. John's Wort ( <i>Hypericum</i> spp.)	Blue Flag Iris ( <i>Iris virginica</i> )	Pickerelweed ( <i>Portulaca cordata</i> )	Fragrant Water Lily ( <i>Nymphaea odorata</i> )

- **Submersed wetland plants** grow entirely under water and cannot survive out of water;
- **Floating wetland plants** either float free on the water or are rooted in the ground with leaves floating on the surface (water lilies);
- **Emergent wetland plants** are rooted in the ground and are the largest category of wetland plants. They are often divided into three subcategories:
  - **Emerging aquatic plants** need to be rooted in the water but leaves and flowers project above the water;
  - **Short-stemmed marginal plants** are low-growing bog-type plants that grow well on wet mud or sand;
  - **Marginal plants** such as ferns, grasses, shrubs and trees, grow on the interface of wetland and upland habitats and prefer changing water levels.

In most planting projects in and around ponds, plants from the emergent wetland plant category are used with the possible exception of water lilies. In order to make the wetland planting project successful, it is important to first identify and contact the regulatory agency responsible for pond permitting in your area. Depending on when the pond was constructed, this can either be the Southwest Florida Water Management District (before 1984) or Sarasota County Resource Protection (861-6113). Before you start planting, it is also important to identify the average water level or shoreline on a yearly basis, measure the maximum water depth in the planting areas, identify the planting zone in and around the pond and develop a plan with the types and number of plants needed in each zone.

The best method for planting is to start from the deepest zone and work towards the shore and to plant early in the morning or late afternoon to avoid the hot midday sun. Planting in clumps creates attractive concentrations of color and will facilitate management of weeds and colonization of unwanted plants. Don't over-plant to prevent overcrowding. The UF/IFAS publication *Creating Wildlife Habitat with Florida Freshwater Wetland Plants* provides good information on the spacing of different plant species and can also help with selection of plants. An electronic version of this publication can be found at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FA/FA00700.pdf>. Since some species perform better than others, and to facilitate maintenance, it is also best to keep the plant palette simple. Some level of periodic maintenance may be needed, especially during the first year of after planting, such as replacing plants that die and removing undesirable aquatic plants. Herbicides should be avoided because new plantings may be sensitive to herbicides. After the first year, when wetland plants are better established, herbicides may be periodically needed if undesirable plants become established. Only herbicides that are registered specifically for use in wetlands (and usually require application by licensed professionals) can legally be used.

## CALENDAR

To register, please call 861-9900, or register online at: <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>.

**October 1: 4:00pm – Wed** **Twin Lakes Park**

**Market Gardening / Food and Safety Regulations – Robert Kluson**

Market gardening is the commercial production of vegetables, fruits, flowers, and other plants on a scale larger than a home garden, yet small enough that many of the principles of gardening can be applied, and is often oriented toward local markets.

**October 2: 2:00pm – Thurs** **Shamrock Park**

**Wildlife Creation In and Around Ponds – Annemarie Post**

Stormwater ponds are specifically designed to slow down and filter stormwater runoff to protect Florida's natural waters. If you live on a pond, let native aquatic and shoreline plants attract wildlife to your garden.

**October 8: 1:00pm – Wed** **Twin Lakes park**

**Termites / What to Know and Do about Them – Fred Santana**

If you live long enough in Florida, you will probably have termites in your home. Dr. Fred Santana, Entomologist, will discuss basic termite biology and behavior, their impact on homes, various approaches that are available to control them, and steps the homeowner can take to discourage their presence.

**October 8: 4:00pm – Wed** **Twin Lakes Park**

**Backyard landscaping for Birds - Robert Kluson**

Learn how to create habitat for birds in your home landscape. The presentation will include examples of the wide diversity of birds that are available for backyard viewing and enjoyment in Sarasota County.

**October 9: 10:00am – Thurs.** **Jacaranda Library - Venice**

**After the Storm / Caring for Storm damaged Trees – Annemarie Post**

It is often difficult to decide what to do about the wide range of damage to the landscape you may encounter after a storm. Learn how to stand up small and large leaning trees, what to do with cracked or split tree trunks and broken branches, and how to restore damaged palms.

**October 20: 2:00pm** **Fruitville Library**

**Creating Your Florida Yard – Master Gardener Yard Advisors**

This program will help you create a garden that is beautiful and protects Florida's fragile environment at the same time, by incorporating Florida Yards & Neighborhoods principles in design and maintenance.

**October 16: 2:00pm – Thurs** **Shamrock Park**

**Termites / What to Know and Do about Them – Fred Santana**

For class description, see October 8.

**October 20: 1:00pm – Wed** **Twin Lakes Park**

**Living Green / Environmentally Sound Pest Management Practices**

Blanket spraying or strict reliance on the liquid sprays is not good pest management. There are other environmentally sound alternatives and least toxic methods that can be used to prevent and suppress many common pests in and around the home and yard.

**October 22: 4:00pm – Wed** **Twin lakes Park**

**Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FYN) Workshop – Annemarie Post**

Practical information will be provided for the Neighborhood Grant applicants and others regarding the FYN program. This class will discuss how adapting environmentally friendly landscape maintenance practices can play an important role in minimizing the potentially harmful effects of urbanization on natural resources. .

**October 29: 1:00pm Wed** **Twin Lakes Park**

**Pollinators - Fred Santana**

Insect and other animal pollinators play a vital role in the production of the food and survival of plants. Dr. Fred Santana will talk about these issues, show images of local pollinators, and discuss pollinator friendly practices.

**October 29: 6:00pm– Wed** **Twin Lakes Park**

**Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate? – Rosalind Denise Keppler**

The distribution of personal belongings at death can cause family rifts and antagonisms that last for years. This class will help you learn how to plan for your own or a family member's distribution of personal property.

## Grant

### Information

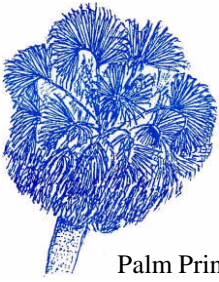
The next **Sarasota County Neighborhood Grant** cycle will start later this year. The Grant Goals are: Enhance Safety (signs for neighborhood watch programs, etc.), Preserve Character and Value (landscaping public rights-of-way or medians, entrances, and removal of non-native invasive plants), Build 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-friendly Landscaping principles. For more information about this program, contact Vicki French at 861-5145 or [vfrench@scgov.net](mailto:vfrench@scgov.net). For more information about the Florida-friendly Landscaping Program, please visit our website (<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>). Also see the website of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), [www.watmatters.org](http://www.watmatters.org), for grant opportunities.

Editor : Annemarie Post  
Extension Agent  
Environmental Horticulture



University of Florida/IFAS  
Sarasota County Extension  
6700 Clark Rd.  
Sarasota, Florida 34241

Phone: (941) 861-9815  
Fax: (941) 861-9886  
Email: [apost@scgov.net](mailto:apost@scgov.net)  
<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>



Palm Prints

UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension  
Florida-friendly Landscaping for Community Associations  
6700 Clark Rd.  
Sarasota, FL 34241

## Editors Notes

### **PLANT SALES, PLANT SALES!!!!**

**The Florida Native Plant Society** will host the Seventh-Annual Native Plant Sale on October 3 & 4 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m and October 5 from 10am – 3pm at Tropiflora Nursery (3530 Tallevast Road, Sarasota, 34243) in Sarasota. Attendees will have the opportunity to purchase from a large selection of Florida native plants. The event is open to the general public with free admission and ample parking across the street at Kinnan Elementary School. The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. Plants available at the sale include a variety of native trees, shrubs, grasses and blooming wildflowers for use in any garden or landscape. **For more information, call the Florida Native Plant Society at 941.794.8773 or email [serenoafnps@yahoo.com](mailto:serenoafnps@yahoo.com).**

The **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale** will be held on Saturday, 11 October 2008 at Bee Ridge Park on the corner of Wilkinson Rd. and S. Lockwood Ridge Rd., Rain or Shine. Florida native Plants, Edibles, Trees, Succulents, Ferns, Vines and more will be for sale. Master Gardeners will be on site for planting advice and information.