

## April Gardening Guide (2007)

By Patricia Porchey

What is a Florida-friendly yard? Is it aesthetically pleasing? Is it all native plants? Is it lawn and non-native plants? It can be all of the above under the guidelines of the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program. The ideal Florida-friendly yard doesn't merely look good; it benefits the environment, protects our natural resources and preserves the state's unique beauty. The future of Florida's treasured water resources begins in your yard. By protecting our environment now, future generations will also be able to enjoy these natural resources. You have a unique opportunity to learn more about creating the ideal Florida-friendly yard, using environmentally-safe landscape practices to sustain it, and saving maintenance time and money it at the Earth Day celebration on April 14 at the Florida House Learning Center.

It's being held in conjunction with the Earth Day celebration at the Watershed Awareness Day at Red Bug Slough. There will be games, contests, and exhibits about water conservation and nonpoint source pollution. Did you know that watering lawns and landscape plants can account for up to 50% of an average homeowner's total water use? There is a children's playground as well as nature trails through Red Bough Slough. Our aim is to educate all ages in practices to conserve and protect our water supply while having a good time and enjoying nature! There will be a shuttle from the Florida House (located at the northwest corner of Proctor and Beneva Roads) to the preserve from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### **Environmentally-safe landscape practices:**

- Cooperate with pre-existing natural conditions instead of working against nature.
- Conserve water and energy – indoors and out.
- Landscape with native and non-native species that require minimal maintenance after establishment.
- Choose plants that blend beauty with environmental benefits.
- Use pesticides only when necessary and according to label directions. Choose least toxic methods first and focus on preventing pests.

**Drought management tip:** Even though one is tempted to apply a little water several times per week during a drought, only one deep watering per week is recommended. Deep watering improves drought resistance by promoting a deeper and more extensive root system. Moisture needs to reach a depth of 6-12 inches for annuals and turf, which is achieved by applying  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch of water. For shrubs and young trees, moisture needs to reach a depth of at least 12 inches or by applying one inch of water.

### **Upcoming educational classes:**

You may now register for classes on-line at our website:

<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/EdSched.htm> or call 861-5000.

- “Healthy Gardening” at Florida House, April 3 at 2:00 p.m.
- “What is your Ecological Footprint? At Twin Lakes Park, April 4 and 25 at 10:00 a.m.

- “Living Green: Alternative Pest Management Practices” at Twin Lakes Park, April 4 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Gardening for Wildlife” at Twin Lakes Park, April 4 at 4:00 p.m.
- “Coastal Native Plants” at Shamrock Park, April 5 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Taking Aim at Termites” at Twin Lakes Park, April 11 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Seasonal Landscape Problems” at Florida House, April 17 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Ants: Number One Household Pest” at Twin Lakes Park, April 18 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Termites: What to Know and Do about Them” at Shamrock Park, April 19 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Don’t Let the Bedbugs Bite!” at Twin Lakes Park, April 25 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Ants In and Around the Home” at Florida House, May 1 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Butterfly Gardening” at Twin Lakes Park, May 2 at noon.
- “Africanized Honeybees: A Growing Menace” at Twin Lakes Park, May 2 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Creating Your Florida Yard” at Shamrock Park, May 3 at 2:00 p.m.

### **Planting guide:**

**Vegetables & Herbs:** Anise, basil, beans, borage, cantaloupe, chervil, comfrey, corn, cucumber, cumin, horehound, lemon balm, marjoram, mint, okra, oregano, peas, summer savory, sweet potatoes, tarragon and thyme.

**Annuals:** Amaranthus, aster, Celosia, Cleome, Coleus, Cosmos, dusty miller, four o’clock, Gazania, geranium, Impatiens, Lobelia, morning glory, Nicotiana, ornamental pepper, Pentas, periwinkle, Phlox, Portulaca, Salvia, Torenia, Verbena and Zinnia.

**Perennials:** African iris, Amazon lily, Aztec lily, blue daze, blue-eyed grass, blood lily, Caladium, Canna, Coreopsis, Crossandra, Dianthus, Gaillardia, Gaura, Gerbera daisy, Gloriosa lily, milkweed, Mexican heather, Philippine violet, rain lily, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Scabiosa, shell ginger, shrimp plants, Tithonia and Verbena.

**Fruits in Season:** Banana, blueberry, carambola, citrus, (calamondin, grapefruit, Key lime, lemon, lime, and orange), kumquat, loquat, Mysore raspberry and strawberry.

**Blooming Plants:** Amaryllis, avocado, azalea, bottlebrush, Bougainvillea, buddleia, confederate jasmine, dwarf Indian hawthorn, Jacaranda tree, Cordia tree, Lantana, Macadamia, Magnolia, Nasturtium, orchid tree, rose, silk oak tree, society garlic, Simpson’s stopper, trumpet tree, Turk’s cap, Viburnum and wildflowers.

### **Satellite Services**

In addition to our four south county library locations, we have two new locations at North Sarasota Library and the Farmers’ Market. Master Gardeners are at the North Sarasota Library, Monday, 10:00 a.m.-noon and the Farmers’ Market, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, 7:00 a.m.-noon.

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