

# January Gardening Guide

By Patricia Porchey

Whenever I drive through an older neighborhood, I am either struck by the sight of majestic mature shade trees or the bareness created by their absence. Studies have shown that wooded residential areas can decrease air temperatures by 8-15% when compared to paved commercial areas. Newer subdivisions have landscape requirements, including trees, that over time will provide many benefits for these homeowners.

Trees have always been an important part of our landscape for aesthetics and shade on a hot summer day. However, there are many other reasons why trees are so valuable in our landscape. According to the Florida Urban Forestry Council, annually one million trees provide \$3.5 million in stormwater runoff savings, \$5 million in air pollution clean-up savings, and \$1 million in energy savings. Tree leaves intercept rain water and roots hold the soil in place as they aid in the percolation of rain water through the soil. Trees lining public streets can reduce ozone levels by 40% and induce traffic speeds to drop by 7-12 MPH. Air conditioning bills can be reduced by nearly half with well-placed trees around your home.

Did you know that plants are our only source of oxygen and trees play a dominant part? Plants remove carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the air and produce oxygen. One tree can remove 32 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. One acre of trees can produce enough oxygen per day for 18 people to breathe.

We can't forget the benefits to wildlife – trees provide habitat and food. They provide shelter and nesting areas for birds large and small as well as some mammals. Their diverse array of seeds and fruits provide food for much of our wildlife.

For 23 years, Sarasota has been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA. In fact, in April 2000, the national Millennium Arbor Day Celebration was held here in Sarasota. To commemorate the occasion, the Millennium Tree Trail was dedicated at the Ringling Museum and remains open to the public today.

Plant a tree for Florida Arbor Day, January 16, so you too can reap the benefits of trees.

For more information about trees and their benefits as well as selection, visit the Trees4Florida website <http://treesarecool.com> and the Florida-friendly plant database website <http://floridayards.org>.

## Upcoming educational classes:

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

<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/EdSched.htm> or call 861-9900.

- Frost Protection for Home Vegetable Gardens, Orange Blossom Community Garden (18<sup>th</sup> & Orange Ave.), 1:00 p.m. Jan. 3
- Partnering with Pollinators, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. Jan. 14

- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, Twin Lakes Park, 4:00 p.m. Jan. 14
- Invasive Insects, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. Jan. 22
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, Fruitville Library, 4:00 p.m. Jan. 26
- Houseplants in Florida, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. Jan. 28
- Pests In & Around the Florida Home, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. Jan. 28
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, Elsie Quirk Library, 10:00 a.m. Feb. 3
- Step by Step Florida-friendly Landscape Training (5 sessions: Feb. 4, 11, 18, Mar. 4, 11), Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. (\$20.00 fee)
- Valentine Topiary, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. Feb. 4
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, Venice Library, 10:00 a.m. Feb. 5
- Snakes of Florida, Jacaranda Library, 10:00 a.m. Feb. 5
- Non-native Invasive Plants, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. Feb. 5
- Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles, Gulf Gate Library, 1:30 p.m. Feb. 6

### **Blooming and planting guide**

- Vegetables & Herbs: Beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, chives, collards, coriander, dill, eggplant, endive, fennel, garlic, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onion, parsley, peas, pepper, potatoes, radish, rosemary, sage, tomatoes, turnips, and watermelon.
- Annuals: Alyssum, ageratum, Calendula, dusty miller, geranium, Lobelia, nasturtium, pansy, ornamental cabbage and kale, petunia, phlox, snapdragon, Statice and Verbena.
- Perennials: Agapanthus, Amaryllis, calla lily, Clivia, Crinum lily, daylily, Dianthus, blue sage, Shasta daisy, society garlic, Tithonia, Viola, and walking iris.
- Fruits in Season: Avocado, banana, carambola, citrus (calamondin, grapefruit, key lime, lemon, lime, orange, and tangerine), hog plum, Indian jujube, kumquat, and papaya.
- Blooming plants: Bougainvillea, bromeliad, Cassia, Chinese hat plant, crown of thorns, desert rose, firebush, Kalanchoe, Lantana, lion's ear, loquat, mango, Mexican flame vine, orchid tree, porterweed, rose, Tabebuia, Thunbergia, and Turk's cap.

### **For information**

If you have questions concerning your landscape, please call or visit our office at Twin Lakes Park on Clark Road east of I-75.

The **Master Gardener Help Desk** is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-Noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. (941-861-9807). We have weekly satellite help desks at the four south county libraries and at the **Downtown Farmer's Market** every third Saturday of the month.

(Patricia Porchey is an Urban Horticulture Agent with University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension. Website: <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>)

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