

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Sunshine
Spotlight:
Backyard
Birding**
- **Yard
Calendar**
- **Earth Day
events!**



The New Leaf Newsletter: Florida-Friendly Landscaping

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2016

New Trees on the Block

Why do we have a love-hate relationship with urban trees? We love them because they're beautiful, they provide shade, support wildlife, and clean our air, yet they can also be a nuisance. I'm sure you can think of one or several trees where the fruits and seeds are messy, the branches are interfering with powerlines and other structures, or the roots have uplifted the sidewalk and are heading towards your foundation. Fixing the problem can create an uglier tree or result in further tree injury. Whatever the solution, it's often pretty costly.

It would be one thing if our nuisance trees were happy trees, but the urban environment is tough, causing many trees to suffer. Urban environments with all our asphalt and concrete are warmer. The trees not only have to deal with the heat but the

increased temperatures attract more pests. Root space is usually restricted as well as air space. We haven't provided the area it requires. As beneficial as urban trees can be for energy costs, air quality, and wildlife habitat, we frequently put the wrong tree in the wrong place. In part it's because we rely on too much of the same few species. Four species dominate the market. Having so many of the same tree cultivar makes much of our urban forest vulnerable to a disease wipe out. Dutch Elm disease in the North East United States did just that. We can greatly improve the resilience of our urban forest and reduce the headaches we have with urban trees if we increase the diversity of species and carefully choose the tree for the site. This means trying different specie varieties, new species, and

smaller trees that we have the space for. Think what could work for your yard, neighborhood, or city and check out these underutilized trees that are ready for city life.

Overused Urban Trees

- Live Oak
- Crape myrtle
- Laurel Oak
- Sabal Palm
- Chinese Elm
- Foxtail Palm
- Slash Pine

Underutilized Urban Trees

- Podocarpus, 'Sunshine Spire'
- Myrtle Oak
- Ashe Magnolia
- Bald Cypress, 'Cave hill'
- Evergreen Maples
- Tea Olive
- Weeping River Birch, 'Summer Cascade'
- Atlantic White Cedar

The Newest EDIS Articles

Conservation Reserve Program: Overview and Discussion

This is the largest-scale, biggest-budgeted conservation program in the US that transitions less productive cropland to natural areas. Learn about its successes and challenges.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fe973>

Why is Exposure to Nature Important in Early Childhood?

This literature review shows the benefits to learning and playing outside. It shares resources for parents and caretakers to increase outdoor opportunities.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fr394>

Facts About a Wildlife Disease: Leprosy

Leprosy is a bacterial disease that infects the skin and nerves. This 4-page fact sheet describes the disease in humans and armadillos and explains how to avoid it and limit its spread.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Sam Wants You! For Backyard Birding



It's funny how a peaceful yard can also be alive with energy. What we might describe as serene has a background of chirping birds with calls or songs to defend their nest or attract a mate. For Sam, this bird backdrop comes into sharper focus. He knows the regular titmice, cardinals, mourning doves and wrens that frequent his yard. He can spot the rare visitor, like a swallowtail kite, with happy surprise. As a backyard birder, Sam realizes how his yard –the pines, low shrubs, and nectaring plants –support a multitude of species. He's lived in central Florida for decades and in Altamonte Springs since 1996. In that time much of the surroundings have developed further, but his yard, with a nearby wetland, continues to be an avian haven and stopover.

What got you interested in backyard birding?

When I moved to Florida from the northeast I was disturbed by the rate that trees were being torn down to accommodate human development. I wanted to join a conservation organization. My mother was a member of the Audubon Society. As a member now of the Seminole Audubon Society I've learned much about bird identification and behavior and the rate that many bird populations are decreasing; precisely because of the loss of their habitat. Building and restoring habitat in our own yards is a way we can make up for losses elsewhere and I applaud FFL in promoting these efforts. Audubon was a good choice for conservation activism, too. Their State Chapter network builds statewide conservation action plans and state leaders keep us informed about legislative issues.



What makes your yard a bird-friendly habitat?

I think providing cover bushes and small trees under the large pines makes the yard bird friendly. The smaller birds can hide in these bushes quickly after making trips to the feeder or bird bath. A healthy yard needs insects like beetles and ants in the ground and on the trees. I encourage insect populations by leaving a few piles of sticks and yard waste on the ground and cover the yard with pine needles. I'm trying to return the yard to its original pine forest ecosystem.



What's the most important thing a homeowner can do?

First keep in mind that most bird populations are in decline. Habitat loss is the primary cause and global warming is worsening that factor. Birds do more than enhance the human experience with their beauty and magical fight. They are part of the interdependency of earth's biological systems. If we allow our yards to be monocultures we reduce the benefits of biodiversity and fewer birds will be attracted to them. There's a sense of sadness for me when I ride by the many homes and even some schools where the yards are covered with grass but lack any trees or native vegetation. The people in those buildings are missing the opportunity to enjoy and be part of nature's marvelous wonders.

Your Yard Calendar

What sights in your yard do you get to look forward to? Flowering trees and frolicking critters will make their debut at different times of year. Yard maintenance can also be most effective when paired with the seasons. Spring time heat and moisture means new growth and active animals!

April

Flowering: Rose, Bottlebrush, Glossy Abelia

Wildlife: Watch for hummingbirds at nectaring plants. Grosbeak, warblers, tanagers, orioles, and thrashers are returning to North America. Most Florida snakes begin mating rituals. Alligators and bears also start moving around. Plant extra parsley for the black swallowtail larvae to feed on.

To Do: Monitor pests like aphids and thrips but identify good bugs too! Apply a slow-release nitrogen, no-phosphorus fertilizer to turf.



May



Flowering: Hibiscus, Southern magnolia, Oleander, Gardenia, African Iris

Wildlife: Breeding begins for most resident and summer songbirds. Alligators start to court and “bellow”.

To Do: Keep watch for pests including chinch bugs and mole crickets. Plant heat-loving plants like salvia, coleus, basil and rosemary.

June

Flowering: Crape Myrtle, Ixora, Oakleaf hydrangea

Wildlife: Shorebirds are nesting, sometimes on rooftops. It's the height of gopher tortoise breeding. Cicadas emerge and make their classic summer sound.

To Do: Warm and rainy is the perfect time to plant palms. Watch for their nutrient deficiencies. Consider a light summer pruning for shrubs.



Learn more at:

Central Florida Gardening Calendar:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep450>

Florida Wildlife Extension, Wildlife Happenings:

http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/

Upcoming Events

City of Sanford Water Wise

Saturday, April 16th, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm.

Lowe's, 3780 Orlando Drive US Hwy 17-92. Come celebrate Water Conservation Month! Get free advice on your landscape. Bring in old high flow showerheads for a low-flow one. Participate in rain barrel demonstrations and learn about other water saving fixtures and strategies. FREE.

Winter Springs Arbor Day

Saturday, April 16th, 4:00—7:00 pm

Red Cypress Brewery, 855 E. SR 434 Winter Springs, FL

Relax and learn while listening to a series of guest speakers talk about native plants, cultural heritage, and landscaping principles. Winter Springs residents can receive a free 15-gal tree, delivered right to their home! FREE.

Contact Sara Miller at 407-327-5976

Casselberry Eco-paddle

Saturday, April 23rd 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Secret Lake Park

Get to know Casselberry's lakes by getting on the water! This FREE canoe tour will show you aquatic plants and wetland wildlife. Space is limited.

RSVP with Marissa Williams 407-262-7725 x1229 or

mwilliams@Casselberry.org

Lake Lotus Earth Day Celebration

Sunday, April 24th, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.

1153 Lake Lotus Park Rd, Altamonte Springs

Enjoy booths, demonstrations, and plant giveaways at this beautiful park in a celebration of our wonderful planet! FREE

Casselberry's 6th Annual Earth Fest!

Saturday, Apr 30, 12:00-5:00 pm

Secret Lake Park

Enjoy an afternoon of fun in Casselberry at Seminole County's largest Earth Day event! Multiple workshops to include tree/plant giveaways. Attend the FFL presentation on Aquascaping, Rain Gardens, & Rain Barrels for a chance to win a free rain barrel! Then join us from 5-8:00pm for our live music event, Earthfest Jam! www.casselberry.org/earthfest

The New Gardener

Wednesday, May 18th, 6:30 -8:30 pm.

Extension Auditorium. 250 W. County Home Rd, Sanford.

Sure you like flowers and admire a grand, old tree, but you've never really tried to grow them yourself. This is a beginners' class on the right plant for the right place and basic landscape design. Come discover your gardening potential! FREE.

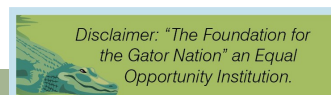
<https://eventbrite.com/event/22694663349>

***Registration is required at least two days before the event.**

Call 407-665-5560 or email fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov

Extension Auditorium address:

250 W County Home Rd., Sanford, 32773



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Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM



FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS



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Florida-Friendly Landscapes protect Florida's unique natural resources by conserving water, reducing waste and pollution, creating wildlife habitat, and preventing erosion. Any landscape can be Florida-Friendly if it is designed and cared for according to the nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles. Seminole County's program is a partnership between the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service, the Public Works department's Watershed Management division, and local government, including the cities below.



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