



Biosphere Buzz

Volume 7, Number 2 Fall Edition
September 2009



Are You Living Green?

I have been lecturing people for years and in every one of our newsletters about the need for more people to understand the need for more environmental sensitivity in our everyday lives. Projects I have recently started at home have proven to be really rewarding and I am able to enjoy things I never thought about before. I'm also happy to report that many of our customers are telling me the same thing about their new projects.

One of the things I have expanded in my everyday routines is recycling. In expanding the articles we recycle from just aluminum cans to glass, paper, plastic, cardboard and scrap metal, we reduce the sheer volume of garbage sent to the landfill. I've also expanded my composting system where almost anything that breaks down in a reasonable time gets put in a compost bin. I just use wire mesh rings and have separate ones for soft items like grass clippings and leaves and hard items like tree limbs, etc. It is amazing what great compost you can create which adds a lot to our sandy soils.

I have particularly enjoyed the two hens I keep in the back yard. They get all the food scraps (they will eat anything), all the weeds I pull from the garden and only whole grain scratch to eat. Commercial egg farms feed them hormone-laden foods to make them lay more eggs. The difference in the eggs from organic foods and those from medicated foods is really amazing.

Add to all this the installation of a small garden plot where you can pick your own tomatoes that actually ripen on the vine and cut your own greens that have never been sprayed with toxins and you get real pleasure, not only for the tastes of homegrown foods but from the knowledge you have greatly reduced your impacts on our already damaged environment!

Try it! You will like it!

Jim Thomas

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Fall Garden Tour Features Florida Native Plants

The Fall Tour of Gardens hosted by the Central Florida Chapter of the Native Plant Society, is scheduled for October 25 from 10 A.M. until 4:00 P.M., offers an excellent opportunity to learn how to enhance the natural beauty of your landscape and neighborhood with native plants. Florida's natives can help you save water, energy and money. They require less fertilizers and pesticides and benefit local wildlife. Over a dozen gardens are available to tour. Come be inspired.

Tickets are \$5, which includes a brochure and garden descriptions, highlights and locations. Tickets are available at Green Images Native Landscape Plants, **Biosphere**, South Seminole Farm and Nursery and Blodgett Gardens. Tickets are limited.

Any unsold tickets will be available the day of the tour at the Florida Friendly Landscaping Demonstration Garden at the Orange County Administration Center and Seminole County Environmental Studies Center. www.fnps.org/pages/chapters/chapterpg.php Chapter Tarflower.

Biosphere Consulting, Inc., 14908 Tilden Road, Winter Garden, Florida 34787
407-656-8277, BiosphereNursery.com
Nursery open to the public, Tuesday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Need Some Gardening Help?

There are a number of free sources of information about gardening problems (besides Biosphere). The IFAS Extension Service now has free clinics available in our area at different locations.

Mondays 9:30-12:00 noon Extension office at 6021 S. Conway Rd., Orlando

Tuesdays 9:00-12:00 noon Apopka Research Center at 2725 Binion Rd., Apopka

Wednesdays 3:00-5:00 P.M. Leu Gardens 1920 N. Forest Ave. Orlando, (407)254-9200

In addition, volunteer Master Gardeners are available at the Extension Office, Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.

It is a good idea to call ahead at (407) 254-9200 to ask about what kinds of samples to bring for analysis. Every gardener should have a PH analysis done to help determine the acidity or alkalinity of landscape soils. Use this valuable service whenever you can to make your gardening and landscaping easier.

New Watering Rules Begin November 1

St. Johns River Water Management District has revised watering schedules that allow watering landscapes only one day a week, beginning the first of November. Better check out our list of drought tolerant plants:

www.BiosphereNursery.com

How to get to Biosphere

From Orlando, go west on Colonial Drive (Hwy 50) to Winter Garden. Turn south on Daniels Road and go 3-miles. Look for Tilden Road on the right side. Turn right heading west on Tilden Road, go about 1 mile. Look for nursery on the left. Or you can go west on the East-West Expressway (408) to the end where it joins the Florida turnpike, take the first exit off (429) then exit immediately to 429 south. Exit at Winter Garden Vineland Road, (CR535), take a left at the stop light to Tilden Road, turn right on Tilden go 1 mile to the nursery on the left. If you are north of us take the 429 from Apopka heading south, you will exit on CR 535 (Winter Garden Vineland Road), take a left to Tilden and turn right on Tilden to nursery on left. If you have trouble and can't seem to find us - don't give up! Give us a call (407) 656 - 8277. We will be happy to help you find your way!

Help Us Install a Bioscape

We have been volunteering a lot of time to the Oakland Nature preserve and we are very proud of this important project that will become even more valuable in environmental education and preservation in years to come.

We have decided to donate a large demonstration bioscape at the preserve, installing all the native plants we have that demonstrate habitat value. We could really use some help in the actual installation and plan to make it a learning experience as well.

We plan to begin the site work at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, September 26 and have planned the major installation for Saturday, October 3 starting at 9:00 A.M. Please come out to help and remember to bring your gloves. After the work party is over maybe take a hike on the boardwalk to Lake Apopka as well. We also like showing off our new log structure environmental education building and our native plant restoration areas. Call us if you need directions or visit the ONP website at Oaklandnaturepreserve.org.

Also plan to attend our annual Oakland Heritage, Arts and Crafts Festival on Saturday, October 24 for a really fun day. We will have a variety of plants for sale that day, donated by local nurseries. All the proceeds go to ONP so plan to make a trip out to Speer Park in downtown Oakland for a real family festival! The festival hours are from 10:00 A.M. until

Adopt a Plant

We are filling up our TLC Corner so please take a minute to see if there is anything you would like to adopt the next time you are out at Biosphere. Also, please remember we give credit on recycled pots!

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Jim Thomas, President

Mona Phipps, Editor

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Save the Dates — Winter & Spring Events

Saturday October 24, Oakland Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival

This festival is the major fundraiser for the Oakland Nature Preserve and is a real good day filled with family fun, good food, music, a silent auction and all kinds of vendors (including a plant sale). The event is one day only from 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. for more information visit www.oaklandnaturepreserve.org.

Saturday, November 7 & Sunday, November 8 Mount Dora Plant and Garden Fair

This show always strives to be a complete all-garden show offering all kinds of fun things to plant and place in your yard. This will be their 15th annual show and it has just gotten better with every year. The show runs from 9:00AM until 5:00 PM both days. Come see us!

Saturday, March 20 and Sunday, March 21, 2010 Annual Harry P. Leu Garden's Spring Plant Sale

This two-day event offers free admission to the beautiful gardens where you can literally spend the day enjoying colorful landscapes and planning how your favorite species can fit into your garden. Lots of plant vendors will be there. A great way to get into Spring. Open both days from 9:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. www.leugardens.org

Saturday, April 10th and Sunday, April 11th 10th Annual Spring Fever in the Garden presented by Bloom'N Grow Garden Society

Held in historic downtown Winter Garden the event captures the charm of the area and offers a wide variety of vendors. Scheduled from 9:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. on Saturday and 11:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. on Sunday. For information www.springfeveringarden.com.

Saturday, April 24 and Sunday April 25 49th Annual Apopka Women's Club Art and Foliage Festival, , sponsored by the Apopka Women's Club

a great group of hard working volunteers dedicated to community improvement. All proceeds from this event go back to the community. Open 9:00 – 5:00.

Saturday, May 15, Seminole Springs Antique Rose and Herb Farm Spring Show. This one-day show has it all. Come out and learn about butterfly gardens, ponds and herds and buy what you need to keep your garden growing. Saturday from 10:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. only. For more information www.rosesandherbs.com

Plan to come and see us and don't forget your wagon or cart!

Senate Bill 2080

Gov. Charlie Crist signed Senate Bill 2080 into law June 30. At first, the bill was hailed as a good step forward in conservation; however, a last minute amendment earned Senate Bill 2080 the ire of conservationists. The new law gives the executive directors of Florida's five water management districts the power to approve water use permits for large projects and developments without public review. The bill contains some good water conservation policy language through promotion of "Florida Friendly" landscaping. However such good provisions do not come close to outweighing the destructive loss of public access to agency decision-making.

The good policy language is a promotion of "Florida Friendly" landscaping and in particular the Bill overrides Homeowner Association (HOA) rules. This makes it easier for home owners to use Florida-friendly landscaping and, in particular, HOA's can no longer require home owners to use St. Augustine or other sod in their landscapes. Specific language in the Bill is as follows:

A deed restriction or covenant may not prohibit or be enforced so as to prohibit any property owner from implementing Florida-friendly landscaping on his or her land or create any requirement or limitation in conflict with any provision of part II of this chapter or a water shortage order, other order, consumptive use permit, or rule adopted or issued pursuant to part II of this chapter.

In addition: The Legislature finds that the use of Florida-friendly landscaping and other water use and pollution prevention measures to conserve or protect the state's water resources serves as a compelling public interest and that the participation of homeowners' associations and local governments is essential to state's efforts in water conservation and water quality.

However, landscape and irrigation designs must follow Florida Yards and Neighborhoods guidelines. This consists of nine guidelines:

- (1) Right Plant, Right Place, (2) Water Efficiently, (3) Fertilize Appropriately, (4) Mulch, (5) Attract Wildlife, (6) Manage Yard Pests Reasonably, (7) Recycle Yard Waste, (8) Reduce Storm-water Runoff and (9) Protect Waterfront

More information on these guidelines can be found at http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm.

In keeping with the Florida Native Plant Society efforts, two more guidelines would be appropriate:

10. Avoid Invasives - for a copy of the most recent recommendations from the IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's natural Areas, see your county's UF/IFAS Extension office or visit <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu.assessment.html>. For more information on invasive plants, see the website of center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at <http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu>.

11. Aim For Diversity - create a mosaic of trees, shrubs, native grasses, groundcovers and wildflowers. Monocultures—large expanses of the same plant species—are prone to disease and insect infestation and aren't as sustainable as a diverse plant community.

We recommend that everyone living within the confines of an HOA, alert their Board of the above. It is doubtful that the majority of home owners and board members are aware of the passage of this bill. This does not mean that we immediately remove turf and replace it with mulch and two plants. It is important to continue to strive to show that native and "Florida friendly" landscaping can look just as pleasing as the wide expanses of lawns.

See our educational flyer entitled 'Converting a Standard Landscape into a Bioscape. It is available on our website at:

www.BiosphereNursery.com.

It's Tree Planting Time

Now is a great time to plant trees. They will soon stop growing and spend the winter building root systems that will give you maximum growth in the spring.

Trees are extremely valuable, especially in urban and suburban areas. They improve water quality by acting as natural filters and reducing stormwater runoff, flooding and erosion. They also improve air quality, reducing dust, ozone, nitrogen oxide, ammonia and sulfur dioxides. Of course, their major value is serving as carbon sinks, taking in carbon dioxide and producing oxygen (40 trees remove 80 pounds of air pollutants annually)!

Trees cool the air naturally from the effects of water evaporating from leaves and by producing shade (four trees planted around each house could save up to 30% on cooling costs). All this in addition to providing valuable wildlife habitat and to the fact they just look good!

One of our employees has put together a great file on trees including information on growth habits (including height, width, life span, etc.), habitat value for the birds, bees, butterflies and hummingbirds and pictures of the mature species with leaf description. The document should be on the web soon so keep checking at Biosphernursery.com. We will also have a price list for our tree sale so visit the web and plan to come and see us soon.

**ALL TREES AT BIOSPHERE WILL BE ON SALE FROM
OCTOBER 1 TO DECEMBER 31
AND WE EVEN HAVE SOME FREE ONES IN OUR TLC CORNER!**

New Services Offered at Biosphere

We are happy to announce that David Schroeder and his company, Evolving Landscapes LLC will join us at Biosphere. David is a landscape architect and his company will be able to offer many services associated with our landscape philosophies: landscapes that have high habitat value, drought tolerance, reduced maintenance and pesticide use. See more information in the attached flyer.

Help Us Save Paper!

If you would like to receive the Biosphere Buzz via email please sign up through our website at www.BiosphereNursery.com, send us your email address through the post or let us know on your next visit to Biosphere.

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