



Biosphere Buzz

Volume 2, Number 2 Summer Edition
June, July, August 2003



Time To Think About Your Garden!

Perhaps you have noticed you haven't received a newsletter for some time. We have several excuses: summer weather in Florida makes it difficult for all but the very hardy to get outside and work, we have been very busy with our restoration and volunteer projects, my recent surgery made it difficult to keep up and we may have gotten a little bit lazy. We are also trying to decide what direction the company should take at this point. We are happy to say we are seeing more and more interest in 'bioscaping' but we still haven't seen enough to justify the expansion we would like to pursue (we would like to have a full-time retail sales area and some other interesting things here). We'll keep thinking about it.

In the meantime, it is time for each of you to get busy in the fall garden. This is an important time for butterflies who need food until cold weather. Migrant birds are beginning to arrive and they need fruiting plants and cover. Water is particularly important in the landscape now and feeders will bring in more species through the fall and winter. Many plants do better here in fall and winter so now is the time to add diversity to your landscape!

Jim Thomas

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Are you Ready to Volunteer Some Time?

We continue to donate time to worthwhile environmental efforts and invite you to join us:

The Oakland Nature Preserve is really coming together and our new boardwalk through forested wetlands to Lake Apopka has become very popular. If you still haven't been there, you should consider planning a hike or we would like to invite you to come along on a walk we have planned for Sunday November 16 at 2:00 PM. The walking tour will view the restoration area as well as the boardwalk. We will meet at the trailside pavilion on the West Orange Trail. For more information give us a call.

Another project we are really excited about is the historic Nehrling Gardens. We have finally convinced Orange County to help buy the old Nehrling estate in Gotha but the Henry Nehrling Society, a non-profit volunteer organization, will be solely responsible for ownership, development and operation. We plan to do demonstration gardens on the six acres and we need members and volunteer workers. This should be a lot of fun. Call us to join!

Mt. Dora Show

We will be displaying a variety of fall-blooming 'bioscape' plants at the annual fall show in Mount Dora on November 1 and 2. This is always a very good show and well worth your time. It will be held at Simpson Cove near downtown. Just follow the signs!

Fall - Time to PLANT:

For Pollinators: plant cosmos, Mexican sunflower and zinnia to get plenty of color before the first frost. We have excellent fall blooming species for lots of color and nectar in November and December: Florida rough sunflower, tree sunflower, cassia, goldenrods, climbing aster, snapdragons, dianthus, buddleia, yarrow, cornflower, cleome and purple coneflower. Wildflower seeds are best sown from October - January. Plant dill, fennel and parsley to attract the Black Swallowtails.

For Humans: plant snap bean, beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, lettuce, mustard, collards, onion (seed and sets), radish, spinach, tomatoes, turnips and herbs.

At Biosphere: This fall we plan to feature four plants that will provide excellent color and nectar food during the months of October, November, and December. These include the Tree Sunflower (*Tithonia diversifolia*), Yellow Cassia (*Cassia bicapsularis*), Rough Sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolia*) and Candy Corn (*Cuphea melvilla*). The tree sunflower is actually a large multi-stem shrub that will grow up to 20 feet high if not trimmed and bears large, six inch diameter yellow sunflowers in November. It is truly spectacular and cuttings can be readily rooted to share with the neighborhood. The yellow cassia grows fast, provides bright yellow flowers in the fall and serves as the larval food for sulfur butterflies. The rough sunflower is a tall native plant which grows in dense clumps, six to eight feet tall with lots of showy flowers in November and December. The candy corn has tall spikes of tubular flowers colored just like its namesake. The leaves turn bronze in fall making this a strikingly beautiful plant. Come by for a visit and check these out if you don't have them in your landscape already or maybe you want more!

Have You Missed A Newsletter?

Remember, all our past newsletters are available on our website:

www.BiosphereNursery.com

Migrating Birds Need Food:

Have you noticed the heavy fruiting of the Beautyberry this year? The plants are beautiful with their clumps of purple berries (we have white ones also) all the way down the stem. It is one of the plants that will grow and fruit in shady areas and every yard should have at least one. Our wax myrtles at the nursery also seem to show unusually heavy fruiting this year. Both these species are important to migrants this time of year.

Wildflowers

Our fresh wildflower seeds for this year have just arrived. For the best results you will want to plant them between now and January. You can check out our website for instructions and order forms. Or, download last September's newsletter. We did an article on wildflowers that you may find helpful. Remember our website is BiosphereNursery.com. We will be bringing seeds in different size packets to the *November show in Mt. Dora* also.

We plan to have many species of wildflowers in four inch pots next spring at Biosphere so you can use them instead of the usual boring bedding plants!

Spring Show — 2004

Bloom 'N Grow Garden Society Presents:
"Spring Fever in the Garden" Saturday March 20 from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM through the middle of Winter Garden. If you haven't had a chance to see their new 'Street Scape' you are in for a treat.

Even though this is a relatively new show (this is their third year) it gets a great turnout which always makes it a fun day and since most of you gardeners are ready by March to get back outside and get to work this is just the opportunity to find some motivation!

Need additional information? Call (407) 656-8277.

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Featured Plants of the Month

For the Native Landscape: Muhly Grass

(Muhlenbergia capillaris)

This beautiful Florida native grass is very tough and non invasive. It is often used on golf courses and is drought tolerant. A tufted perennial, it can be recognized by its hair-like leaves and soft pink panicles which spike in the fall from October through November. Muhly Grass grows up to three and a half feet and the panicles (a compound inflorescence with pedicellate flower or single row of flowers) are soft pink to bright purple, almost resembling cotton candy. If you like the grasses you will love Muhly Grass!

Tree of the Month: Sycamore

(Platanus occidentalis)

We find many people are more or less prejudiced against this tree but we have found it to be one of the best fast growing, hardy shade trees to be planted here. Sure, it drops a lot of leaves, but they are large and usually fall all at the same time so clean-up is easy.

This deciduous tree offers an excellent source of shade in Florida. The leaves are broadly ovate from four to eight inches wide and have three to five lobes. Sycamores can reach a height of greater than 100 feet and have a wide spreading crown. Diameters of these trees can range from three to 10 feet. The seeds are held in round fruits about one inch in diameter resembling a button ball. The branches are very massive themselves and the wood used from this tree is cut for tobacco boxes and butcher blocks. The bark has a very attractive mottled appearance. In the fall the leaves turn bright yellow and drop to the ground.

Often planted on streets this tree can make a great addition to your landscape. It can shade your house from the sun in the summer months and let the sun in during winter. We have a wide variety of sizes available at reduced prices.

For the Butterflies: Climbing Aster

(Aster carolinianus)

Climbing Aster is a Florida native, which is usually found around the edges of swamps and wetlands. It has a range covering the entire state and can be found in deep shade or full sun. It is a robust perennial that has dense foliage on woody stems. It has a sprawling growth habit that will grow over anything available to support it. The leaves are elliptical or lance shaped and are dark green in color. In late fall, this plant makes a large display of numerous lavender aster flowers. It is a great nectar source and attracts many different pollinators. The Pearly Crescent Butterfly lays its eggs on this aster and the larvae eat the leaves. Even though it is normally found in moist areas, we have found it to be very adaptable to the average landscape. Yearly pruning of all dead stems is needed in to keep a neat appearance.

Elliot's Aster, a great native shrub, can be used in areas where there is no support for Climbing Aster.

RODEO

We still have quart containers of concentrated RODEO available for those who need to use herbicide in a natural wetland or lake system.

Our fearless leader, Jim Thomas, will be presenting a free slide program and lecture on 'BIOSCAPING' at the October 16th meeting of the Orange Audubon Society -- 7:00 P.M. at Leu Gardens. You are welcome to attend.

Bioscaping is a term Jim coined for landscaping to improve habitat value, conserve water, decrease maintenance and the use of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals.

How to get to Biosphere

We Have A New Interchange!

Heading west on the East-West Expressway (408) go to the end to the Florida Turnpike, take the first exit (429) toward Apopka and C.R. 535, take an immediate left to C.R. 535, turn left at the signal and go about one mile to Tilden Road, make a right on Tilden and the nursery will be on your left. Biosphere is open every Saturday from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM

If you try calling first and don't get an answer not to worry — on Saturday we play outside.....

We Appreciate Your Business

Visit Our Booth—Receive A Gift

Bring this coupon with you to the Mt. Dora Show on November 1 or 2 and receive a small token of our appreciation for allowing us help you create your landscape.

Bioscape Success Stories

It is very encouraging to see so many successful bioscape projects being developed by our clients and friends: Annette in Seminole County took on a massive task clearing exotics from a marshy wetland on her property and replanting with a variety of desirable native species and she did it all single-handedly! The homeowners of Tanner Road Crossing took on the job of aquascaping an unsightly retention pond and making it beautiful as well as habitat friendly. Barbara A. bought a house, ripped out most of the lawn, (as much as the HOA would allow), and installed over 300 plants in her native landscape that is beautiful, functional and drought tolerant. Tracy, in Seminole Springs, got nesting BLUEBIRDS almost immediately after she installed several of our boxes. Sheryle M. had success with her nest-box also and ended up with a family of screech owls. She has also installed a topnotch example of a pollinator garden and aquascape. Our good friend John N. and wife have done a lot of work testing passionvines to see which are the most functional in rearing butterflies and he is now experimenting with pawpaws which we desperately need for the Zebra Swallowtails. Eileen C. over in Clermont, installed native bird and butterfly plants last year and this year has an amazing bioscape all around her home. Barbara R. has a beautiful butterfly garden that has produced a vareiety of butterflies and a number of elementary schools we have worked with have successful pollinator gardens. The homeowners at Plantation Grove installed a great aquascape in their main retention pond and it has improved water

quality. A brave teacher at Narcoossee Community School took on a large wetland restoration project with her class and even received a grant! (Talk about hands on). Many of our clients kept a watchful eye on the nesting woodducks last spring as they made their homes in the boxes they had installed on their lakefronts.

We get calls all the time from people who are taking pleasure in experiencing nature in their yards and around their homes. It is rewarding to know they get as excited as we do about what they are creating. We love hearing about these projects and receiving pictures so keep them coming!

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Come See us on a Saturday 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

9th Annual Mt. Dora Plant & Garden Fair

Well, it's that time again. (Can you believe November is almost here)! November 1 and 2 we will be in Mt. Dora for the annual Plant and Garden Fair. The show will be open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday at Simpson Cove near the downtown area.

No need to go through the winter without something beautiful blooming in the garden. We will be bringing lots of larval and nectar plants for your pollinator gardens plus **fresh wildflower seeds** so you can get your beds ready for next year's blooms. So, take the day off from working in your garden and come and get lots more plants!

Christine Cole, Chairman of the event, expects some new exhibitors this year that will add "something new and different to the mix". Plan to make the day of it and visit historical Mt. Dora.

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