



Biosphere Buzz

Volume 1, Number 1

March, 2002



Welcome to Biosphere Buzz!

This is Biosphere's first edition of a newsletter designed to help educate homeowners about alternative landscape and aquascape possibilities. Here you will find information about native species of plants that provide better habitat for both humans and creatures than the usual lawn grass, and that require less water and fertilizer, fewer pesticides, and less work!

We have coined the word *Bioscape* to describe this approach — and this is our specialty. We hope you will use our information, and we encourage you to respond. Call or e-mail at the address below.

Jim Thomas

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What Biosphere Is All About

Biosphere Consulting, Inc., was first incorporated in 1975 as an environmental consulting firm. After years of working toward reducing the environmental impacts of proposed developments and designing mitigation projects, the company began to focus its efforts on restoration and the recreation of natural systems. The nursery was started in 1991 to supply plants for its projects, which were designed to increase habitat value in developed — even urban — areas.

The principal of the firm, Jim Thomas, is a fourth generation Florida native with a great appreciation for natural Florida and with degrees in biology. After years of watching the systematic destruction of native habitats, he became an environmental activist and participated in environmental projects that brought about the successful preservation and restora-

tion of many valuable natural areas. Combining the application of sound scientific principles with political reality and the organization of educated citizen advocates has proven to be a successful formula. The firm still contributes considerable time and resources to environmental causes.

We believe ecological restoration is the environmental key to the future. Our nursery specializes in growing plants native to Florida, which we use for the restoration of shorelines and conservation areas. We can create gardens that attract pollinating insects and we can plant an entire habitat. We offer several services to help our customers attain these goals:

Lakefront Restoration. Lakefront homeowners can do much to improve the quality of water and
continued next page

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Nursery open to the public, Saturdays, 9 a.m.—3 p.m., or by appointment.

Biosphere services, continued

habitat by removing noxious plant species and installing beneficial native species. We have an experienced crew that can restore your lakefront and maintain it on a monthly basis to ensure the re-vegetation of desirable shoreline species. Let us help you design and plant your *Aquascape* with colorful native species that beautify wet areas.

Pollinator Gardens. Want butterflies? Don't spread poisons in your garden to kill those pesky caterpillars (that turn into butterflies)! Insects pollinate flowers, but so many of us use insecticides that pollinators are dying, causing the decline of many native plants. You can help by creating a garden that attracts and feeds these pollinators, including *butterflies*. We can help you select the proper larval and nectar plants for your yard.

Urban Habitat Enhancement . You can have a little wildlife in your yard even if you live in the city. Many wildlife species will coexist with us humans if we provide their basic requirements: food, cover, water, and nesting areas. Our **Bioscapes** include the proper nestboxes, feeders, and plants to attract birds and other wildlife.

Wildflower Gardens. Many people have tried to grow wildflowers with disappointing results, primarily because the species selected were not adapted to the specific area. Our research has helped us select those species, native and non-native, that will thrive in your yard.

Ecological Landscape Design. Want the whole place to be a healthy ecosystem? We can provide the design and selection of plant pallets for an attractive and functional *Bioscape* for one residential unit or a whole community! And then we can assist with the ecosystem and landscape management plans.

Additional Services. And that's not all! In addition to plant production for *Bioscape* projects, the firm also offers the following scope of services: Design and Creation of Wetland Systems, Mitigation Design, Ecosystem Management and Monitoring Plans, Maintenance Services (for lakefront and retention ponds), Mitigation Banking, Exotic Plant Management, Technical Writing and Presentations.

March Is the Time to . . .

Prune: Frost-damaged foliage can now be safely removed. Do not prune plants that have spring blooms and do not us pruning paint.

Plant: Black-eyed susans, asters, coneflowers, cleome, coreopsis, cosmos, dahlberg daisy, gaillardia, goldenrod, morning glory, salvia (all species), verbena, zinnia, Mexican sunflowers, passion vines, herbs, cannas, rain lilies, false nettle, guara, buddleia, cassia, delphinium, showy primrose, yarrow, partridge pea, helianthus, liatris, lobelia, standing cypress, lion's mane, hypericum, porterweed, firespike, honeysuckles, and eleagnus.

You may still plant the cool-loving **vegetables**, such as beets, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, and radishes if you put in plants rather than seeds. Other vegetables you can plant by seed now include beans, cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, eggplant, okra, peanut, pepper, pumpkin, peas, squash, sweet potato, tomato, and watermelon. (Wow! Have you seen how many tomato varieties are available now? They come in all shapes, sizes, and colors!)

Fertilize: Lawns (if you still insist on having one) trees, shrubs, palms, and vegetables (feed lightly every two or three weeks).

Install: Birdbaths and bird nest boxes (see our list of appropriate nest boxes).



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Biosphere Buzz is published monthly by Biosphere Consulting, Inc., and is sent free to its customers.

Put Up a Bird Nest Box

Our research has shown that many bird populations are becoming seriously limited due to lack of nest cavities. Screech-Owls, woodpeckers, bluebirds, wood ducks, and crested flycatchers (as well as raccoons and opossums) all require holes in trees to nest in. Old dead trees with cavities that were once the nesting sites for many different species are being cut down as land is cleared for development.

Many species will adapt and co-exist even in an urban habitat if the landscape includes the basics they require: food, cover, water, and nesting space. A few simple nesting boxes, of the right specifications, will replace cavities in dead trees and make it possible for many species to breed.

We have boxes! Now available:

	Retail
Combo (Wren, Titmouse, Downy Woodpecker)	7.95
Crested Flycatcher	8.95
Screech Owl	10.95
Flicker	10.95
Bluebird	7.95
Barred Owl	19.95
Barn Owl	19.95
Wood Duck	24.95
And Feeders	8.95

Plant Shows

If you enjoy plants and want to add plants to your yard, visit a plant show. You will see a large variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers to choose from, and many are often at special prices. You can talk to knowledgeable growers to match the plant to your location, and the timing for planting is right.

Check out **Biosphere's** spring plants at the following shows:

Saturday, March 16 — *Spring Fever in the Garden*, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., downtown Winter Garden. This show was a lot of fun last year!

Saturday and Sunday, March 23 - 24 — *Leu Gardens Plant Sale*, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. both days, with free admission to the Gardens. This year they will not have a plant pick-up area, so bring a cart or wagon if possible. This is the biggest show of the year with many vendors!

Saturday and Sunday, April 27 - 28 — *Apopka Art and Foliage Festival*, 9 p.m. - 5 p.m. both days. Sponsored by the Apopka Woman's Club. This is always a good show.

Remember, **Biosphere** is open to the public for retail sales every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. So if you can't make the shows (or even if you do!) plan to come out and see us at the nursery.

HELP!

If you wish to continue to receive this free newsletter, please fill out the form below and mail it to us at **Biosphere Consulting, 14908 Tilden Road, Winter Garden, FL 34787.**

Or better yet, if you are willing to receive the newsletter on line, e-mail us at **Biosphere5@aol.com** That would be very helpful in allowing us to continue this service to you. Also, feel free to pass this information, newsletter, or e-mail address on to others you know who may be interested in receiving it.

Give us your thoughts and suggestions about the newsletter and our operation.

Yes! Please continue to mail me your free newsletter!

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

E-Mail _____

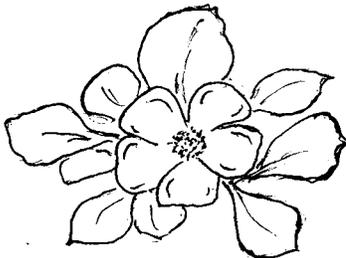
Featured Plants of the Month

For the Native Landscape: Simpson's Stopper

Simpson's stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans* var. *simpsonii*), also called twinberry, is one of the most versatile and beautiful native landscape shrubs available. It has small, shiny, dark green leaves, white flowers that attract pollinators, and red berries relished by birds and other wildlife. It is native to Florida from St. Johns County south through central and south Florida. In the wild, it occurs primarily in coastal regions and can often be found growing just behind the primary dunes along the shoreline. It is very hardy and adaptable in the home landscape.

For the Birds: Summer Haw

Summer Haw (*Crataegus flava*), is a small tree that flowers in early spring and produces a fruit that looks like a small crabapple.



Its drooping form is very attractive, but because the tree has some thorns, perhaps you'd prefer to plant it in an isolated area of the landscape. It is deciduous.

A similar tree, parsley haw, also grows here.

Drawings by PSL

For the Butterflies: Parsley, Dill, and Fennel

These common, easy to grow herbs are valuable in the garden as larval food for the Eastern Black Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio polyxenes*).



This large black butterfly has two rows of pale yellow spots with a band of blue spots on the hind wings and a red spot with a black center on the corner of each wing. The smooth green caterpillar has black bands with yellow spots and eats a variety of plants in the carrot family. Ask for our list of recommended butterfly larval plants or check our web site: BiosphereNursery.com.

Teaching Children

If we are to expect sound decisions on environmental issues in the future, today's children must become aware of the connections between people and natural systems. Learning about this relationship will help children acquire a greater interest and appreciation of the world around us.

We at **Biosphere** stand ready to assist in any way possible to encourage the educational process. Visit our website:

BiosphereNursery.com

Printed on Recycled Paper
(30% post-consumer waste)
With environmentally friendly soy ink

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 13
Oakland, FL 34760

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