



Latino Environmental Education Network Newsletter

Fall 2008

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Did you know?

- Latinos make up 25% of Collier County and 15% of Lee County's population.
- Immigrant Latinos come from countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America
- The mission of the Latino Environmental Education Network is to target environmental education efforts to an audience that has not been reached by traditional programs.

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National Estuary Day in Southwest Florida *By Ernesto Lasso de la Vega.*

Southwest Florida is blessed with aquatic environments that have seen many generations. Since the Calusa Indians were established, about 6000 years ago, to the present when residents enjoy the beauty and richness of the area; the surrounding waters have been crucial to the health of the region.



The major rivers of Southwest Florida, the Caloosahatchee, Peace, Myakka, Estero, and Imperial River, flow into water bodies known as estuaries, where fresh and salt water conditions blend.

We hear of these estuaries most often linked to issues such as pollution, water shortage or floods, red tide, or fishing declines. However, now we have an opportunity to celebrate, learn about and enjoy this amazing resource. National Estuary Day is a day of celebration nationwide but here in southwest Florida we require a whole month of celebration due to so many activities that commemorate the importance and magnitude of these systems. The celebration starts with a proclamation by the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP), approved and executed by many counties, cities, and governmental entities declaring September 27 as National Estuary Day. For the next month and a half numerous activities have been organized to highlight the beauty and value of our estuaries. There is something for everyone, from boat tours, paddling trips, wading trips, guided walks, to special events such as the festivals throughout the seven counties that make up the watershed of Charlotte Harbor. To learn more about all these wonderful opportunities to get close and personal with nature, please check the web site www.CHNEP.org and find a detail schedule of events in the online newsletter *Harbor Happenings* Fall 2008 issue (in English and Spanish).

Meet the Program SustainLEE. *By Martha Avila*

The Lee County SustainLEE Program has been created to help preserve our natural environment and to educate the community by promoting GREEN LIVING choices and sustainable agriculture. Our education programs include showing the role reducing, reusing and recycling play in protecting our natural environment and encouraging sustainable behaviors. Our biofuel research includes, among others, the once little known shrub *Jatropha curcas*, which is now receiving the global attention it deserves as a cleaner replacement fuel for diesel engine power trucks and boats.



Feeding Pelicans Does More Harm Than Good *By Bryan Fluech, Collier County Sea Grant Agent*

Chances are if you've been to a boat ramp, pier or marina, you've witnessed someone cleaning a fish and tossing the remains in the water. There's also a good chance that a pelican was waiting nearby to accept the free handouts. Scenes like this are not uncommon, and despite a fisherman's benign intentions, the end result can be tragic.

Brown pelicans are active predators that are adapted to hunt, swallow and digest small fish. When they are fed the remains of larger fish it puts them in harms way. Pelicans may not be able to swallow the remains of a larger fish, and the exposed bones can rip a pelican's pouch, decreasing its ability to catch its own food. The remains can also get caught in the pelican's throat or tear the bird's stomach resulting in serious injury or death.



Another issue with feeding pelicans, or any wildlife, is they lose their fear of humans, become more dependent on them for food and may lose the ability to hunt on their own, which can lead to malnutrition and starvation. They can become a nuisance and reduce the quality of one's outdoor experience. These actions also increase the likelihood of pelicans getting entangled in fishing line or snagged by hooks when they approach fishermen to beg. Disposing of bait and cleaning fish out of sight of pelicans can help minimize these incidents.

To learn more how you can minimize impacts on pelicans visit: <http://collier.ifas.ufl.edu/SeaGrant/SeaGrantHome.shtml>.

Protecting Mangroves in Southwest Florida *By Joy Hazell, Lee County Sea Grant Agent*

Mangroves are an essential part of Southwest Florida's coastal environment. These unique trees can be seen along the coast in our brackish calmer water environments. Mangroves provide small fish and shellfish food and shelter from predators. It is estimated that 70-90% of commercially and recreationally important fish species spend part of their life cycles in estuarine habitats such as mangrove forests. Mangroves also help filter nutrients and pollutants from our estuarine waters, improving water quality for swimming, boating and fishing.

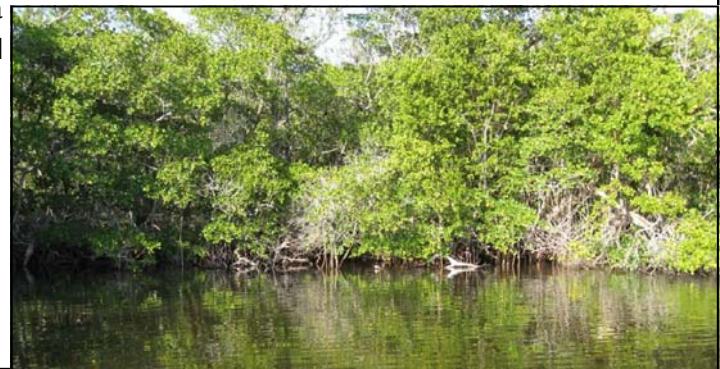
Mangroves buffer our coast from large storm events such as hurricanes, stabilize our shorelines and help prevent erosion. To incorporate mangroves into your shoreline use a collection of loose stones called rip rap, as an alternative to a seawall or placed in front of a seawall. If you have mangroves in the immediate area they should establish naturally. Leave mangrove propagules where they fall. The propagule, or seed of the mangrove will survive and develop for a period of time away from the parent tree until it finds a suitable place to establish.

To protect your established or growing mangroves remove invasive exotics from your mangrove fringe. Common invasive exotic plants in Southwest Florida include Brazilian pepper, Australian pine and carrotwood. These trees can out-compete mangroves and may not provide food or habitat for local wildlife.

Mangroves are protected by Florida law. Improper trimming can harm or kill mangroves. To protect your mangroves and maintain beautiful views your best bet is to hire a Professional Mangrove Trimmer (PMT) who knows the laws and proper trimming procedures.

For more information:

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/coastal/habitats/mangroves.htm>



Why Buy Locally Grown? By Martha Avila, Lee County Sustainability Specialist

We can all agree that biting into a sweet, juicy piece fruit can put a smile your face whether it be a strawberry, peach, pineapple or mango. But have you ever wondered what impact that delicious fruit or vegetable has on our environment. Within the U.S. fresh produce are typically hauled an average of 1,500 to 2,500 miles from the farm to the table, with a 7 to 14 day average time in transit.

In 2002 these produce transportation resulted in 19 tons of carbon dioxide being released into the air. Another 7,000 tones of this global warming pollution is released yearly into the air with the arrival of 270 million pounds of grapes from Chile to the Port of Los Angeles CA on cargo ships. These figures may be alarming, but it is important for us to be aware of and consider the cost of our choices, which goes way beyond the price per pound.

There are many things we can do, collectively or as individuals, to minimize the impact of global warming. For instance, our beautiful state of Florida has 10.4 million acres of farmland with 42,500 commercial farms. By purchasing Local Produce you will be paying for freshness and taste not transportation. Although this may seem like a small contribution, it will serve to better the world we are living in many ways. **COUNT THE COST!** Our local Farmers Market is located in Fort Myers on Edison Street, and is open seven days a week. We also have a Farmer's Market located in Downtown Fort Myers on Edwards Street, and is open every Thursday 6:00am to 2:00pm.



For more information <http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/food/local.html>

Lawn and garden pesticide regulation in Florida By Alberto Chavez, Project Greenscape Coordinator

A pesticide is a chemical substance, biological agent, antimicrobial, disinfectant or device used to kill a pest. A pest is anything that competes with, injures or spreads disease to humans, domestic animals, desirable plants, structures or possessions. Pests can be microbes, plant pathogens, nematodes, mollusks, fish, insects, reptiles, birds and even mammals.



In the State of Florida, professional application of any type of pesticides on lawns and ornamental plantings requires a license. Professional pesticide application is regulated by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services through the Bureau of Compliance Monitoring/Pesticide Certification Section. There are different types of license programs depending on the type of work you conduct. Failure to have proper license is a major code violation and can result in steep fines.

A wide range of pesticides are available for homeowners, which can be applied by the resident without a license. Improper use of pesticides can be harmful or fatal to humans and can cause serious environmental contamination. Detailed information about pesticide products can be found on the label. Always read the label and follow instruction carefully. If you do not understand the terminology or the information in it, we recommend consulting your local extension agent.

If you are a professional landscaper and you are interested in obtaining a license to apply pesticides, contact your nearest University of Florida Extension Office and visit the website: <http://pested.ifas.ufl.edu>

Mark Your Calendar

October 25 to November 2. Calusa Blueway Paddling Festival . Sponsored by Lee County Parks and Recreation and Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau. For more information visit: <http://www.calusabluewaypaddlingfestival.com>

Thursday, November 13. Green Industries Best Management Practices Certification [Spanish]. Sponsored by Rookery Bay & Project Greenscape. \$25. Registration required. Contact 239-417-6310

Thursday, November 20. Interacting with Wildlife. Sponsored by Rookery Bay & Project Greenscape. Registration required. Contact 239-417-6310

Saturday, November 22. Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival. Sponsored by Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program. Contact www.chnep.org

Tuesday, December 9. Urban Pond Management . Sponsored by Rookery Bay & Project Greenscape. Registration required. Contact 239-417-6310

Thursday, December 11. Urban Pond Management Seminar. Sponsored by Lee County UF/IFAS Extension. Contact 239-533-7523

Tuesday, January 13, 2009. Reef Fish Gear Workshop. Sponsored by Collier County Sea Grant. Contact 239-417-6310 x204

Ongoing, Rain Barrel Workshops. Sponsored by Florida Yards and Neighborhoods. Contact 239-533-7523

Ongoing, Nine Principles of a Florida Friendly Yard. Sponsored by Florida Yards and Neighborhoods. Contact 239-533-7523

More Information:

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