

FALL 2008



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to respond to Lee County issues and needs through customized education and training in agriculture/ natural resources, horticulture, youth development, marine education, Florida yards & neighborhoods, and family and consumer sciences.



HORTICULTURE

The horticulture program provides information on what to grow and how to grow it. Advice for nurseries, landscapers and homeowners. The program offers frequent and topical classes, seminars and short courses on all aspects of plant care. Basic Research provides answers to local questions. A horticulture specialist and Master Gardeners are available for daily consultation on local gardening problems. The horticulture web page will keep you current on activities and alert you to special local problems and solutions.



FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

To keep up with today's busy lifestyles, Family and Consumer Sciences offers programs in parenting, food safety, money management, and nutrition. Education for families on parenting, preparation for marriage and divorce which includes mentoring.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT /4-H

More than 200 "learn by doing" project areas are offered for young people, including marine science, science, computers, aerospace, family oriented activities, citizenship, livestock and horses, public speaking skills, and other life skills.



AGRICULTURE/NATURAL RESOURCES

The latest in natural resource education, pesticide use and certification information is offered to assist interested citizens, developers and government agencies. Farmers and ranchers are provided with rapid response to problems occurring with their crops and lands, and updates on pesticide technology.



MARINE EDUCATION

Environmental Education and fisheries enhancement projects are just a few of the programs offered.



FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS

Creating and maintaining attractive landscapes to enhance our community and to protect Florida's natural environment.

SustainabLEE IFAS Extension Sustainability Program

Martha C. Avila, Sustainability Specialist

Referred to as the **SustainabLEE Program**, the Sustainability Program in Lee County has been created to support the preservation of our natural environment and resources, while building capacity to meet the economic, social and political challenges inherent in moving towards a sustainable community.

The SustainabLEE Program helps to connect individuals, businesses and government; promoting sustainability in a wide range of disciplines including sustainable agriculture, water conservation, 'green' buildings and energy efficiency. The program contributes to improving our quality of life through education about sustainable choices, and reducing our ecological footprint while contributing to minimizing the impact of global warming.

Given the extreme **NEED** to act now in the face of Climate Change and the depletion of fossil-fuel resources, the program is also focused on promoting the development and implementation of alternative renewable energies which are cost competitive and environmentally compatible. Energy is the fuel of growth; it is the essential requirement for economic and social development. Climate change offers us real opportunities and challenges to develop and place our society on a more sustainable path.

SustainabLEE offers opportunities to show our ability to preserve the future of our planet and hence our children's future, considering that we have the bigger mission, "**ONE PLANET TO SAVE**".

As you seek the means to becoming better stewards of the environment, we welcome your contact and support so that together we can explore green solutions for our economic and environmental welfare. After all, **The solutions are in our hands!**

At this year's Edison Pageant of Light Parade, the Department of Parks & Recreation and UF/IFAS Extension Service was well represented through the **Living Green Float**.



The purpose of this float was to increase public awareness on saving energy while helping the environment and that was to "Make the Switch" from using incandescent light bulbs, to compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs. Also highlighted were other ways to "live green" -- such as using bicycles instead of cars, solar and wind energy, recycling, native plants, and biofuels.

The Edison Parade 2008 was the largest event to date with over **250,000** people lining the streets and 171 individual entrants such as floats, marching bands, cars, etc. This float not only provided us with the recognition to receive an "Honorable Mention" award, it also gave us an important opportunity to reach **250,000** people and if only **15%** paid any attention to our "green" message, then we still reached **37,500** people. From this number, if they changed just 1 incandescent light bulb for 1 CFL light bulb; this would help to decrease carbon emission by a total of **52,000,000** pounds-during the life of the CFL light bulb (4-5 years). Also, it would save **\$68** for each home during the life of the CFL.

WHAT'S INSIDE

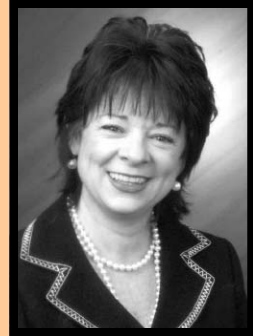
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DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

By: *Celia Hill*

Sustainability: of or relating to a lifestyle involving the use of sustainable methods <sustainable society>

The act of living sustainability has been around for a long time. As a historic agricultural nation we used our local land and water to provide our daily needs for food and other needs. We lived locally and often grew a good portion of our food and preserved it to feed our family throughout the year. Our land may have also provided the



income for the family through the sale of crops, or cattle. Purchases of non-home grown food were not from international sources. If family members worked they tried to work as close to home as possible. For many people being sustainable was

keeping your family fed, clothed and sheltered.

Our world today has moved past local goods and into an international marketplace. Our definition of sustainability has likewise expanded. Yet, to truly live sustainable we can look right in our community. We can purchase locally grown food, take care of our fresh and salt water resources, respect the efforts of our county to preserve land, reduce our consumption of foreign oil through conserving electricity and opt for hybrid vehicles or ones with high miles per gallon ratings.

In our newsletter you will read about sustainability from many different perspectives. We are teaching Best Management Practices (BMP) to growers, landscape professionals, and concerned citizens. Our hope is they will apply this knowledge at their business and home to improve and sustain our Lee County environment.

We work with families in the areas of nutrition, money management, communication, and energy in hopes they will maintain sustainable homes. Being a sustainable family also means training your children to understand the fragility of resources and how to properly care for or handle them. Our 4H youth development program has many opportunities for youth to learn how to be a sustainable citizen.

We work with local anglers to increase the chances of fish caught and released back into our waters live to be caught another day. The more fish that survive the more fish we will have for future generations.

Sustainability....it's not just a fad, it is living in a way to ensure future generations have the opportunities and resources we take for granted.

Water Sense Around The House

By: *Karen Headlee, FCS Agent*

By making a few small changes to your daily routine, you can save a significant amount of water, which will save you money and preserve water supplies for future generations.



Fix That Leak – Leaky faucets can waste more than 3,000 gallons of water each year and a leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water every day. To tell if your toilet has a leak, place a drop of blue toilet bowl cleaner or food coloring in the tank: if the color shows in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Check under your sinks and your outside faucets for slow

dripping leaks.

Make It A Full Load – The average washing machine uses about 41 gallons of water per load. Wash only full loads of laundry or use the right load size setting on your machine.

Shower Power - A full tub requires 70 gallons of water. Taking a five minute shower uses 10-25 gallons. If you take the time and effort to make small changes in water usage, you can lower your water bill and help protect our water resources.

**'Greening' Your Landscape
Recognition for your Florida-friendly yard**

By: *Tom Becker, FYN Agent*

Even with a slowed housing market, developments continue to place increased demands on our natural resources. The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program (FYN) in Lee County encourages the use of Florida-friendly landscapes when renovating your yard or installing new landscapes at new construction sites. Once established, the low maintenance lawn and landscape lessens the impact of growth on our natural resources.

"Green" landscaping has moved into the mainstream. Homeowners pay a premium for green homes with 'low-maintenance' landscape plantings.. These sustainable homes design their yards planted with well-adapted trees, shrubs and groundcovers tolerating very 'wet' and very 'dry' soil conditions.

The FYN program provides a variety of practical publications and DVDs including Florida-friendly plant lists for builders, developers and homeowners. The FYN staff review landscape plans created by homeowners or landscape architects, create maintenance schedules for homeowners and gated communities and award points towards green home and Florida-friendly yard certification.

Homeowners installing a Florida-friendly yard can choose from a wide range of landscape design forms &



styles, from formal & manicured to wild and more natural-looking. How you *maintain* the

yard ultimately determines eligibility for Florida-friendly landscape recognition.

For example, yards receive the highest point scores when an in-ground irrigation



system is turned off and manually operated. Or, when overgrown, dead or dying shrubs are replaced with low maintenance, Florida-friendly or native plants.

In addition, Florida yard owners maintain their lawns with a minimum (once or twice a year) fertilizer or pesticide applications. Owners also reduce storm water runoff by using rain barrels to catch and slow down rain water coming off the roof of the home.

Review the requirements for a Florida yard at <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/publications.htm>. Fill out the on-line yard assessment survey (@ FYN checklist) and assign points for the changes you have made to protect the environment in your yard. Send your completed checklist to the Lee County Extension office. Within a week, a FYN staff member will call and arrange a yard visit and tour at a date/time that is convenient for you. Contact Mary Ann Parsons, the FYN Program Assistant, at 239-533-7503 or send an email to mparsons@leegov.com. The yard recognition program is a **FREE** service to Lee County residents.

It's a Green Thing in 4-H

By Cathy Suggs, 4-H Youth Development Agent

The State theme in 4-H is, "It's a Green Thing." The focus of the youth led state executive board is to educate youth throughout the state of Florida to be sustainable and leave the earth better than they found it. Sustainable education has been occurring at state and county events attended by thousands of 4-H throughout the year.

At Congress and the Lee County Awards banquet, youth announcers gave green tips to their audiences. The audience learned that energy can be saved by making the switch to compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs, the value of using cloth bags for shopping, and numerous waterwise tips.

One example of 4-H youth working to make the Florida environment a better world occurred at Camp Cloverleaf this summer. One hundred and twenty 4-H youth from Lee, Martin, and Indian River made cement reef balls for a manmade reef for marine life in the St. Johns River.

Another example of sustainable education occurred during the summer. Agents from Lee

County partnered together to teach a week long Sustainable Lee 4-H Camp which was attended by 26 youth. Youth were surprised to learn that plastic shopping bags are hurting our marine life in Florida. They were not aware that turtles and manatees mistake the bags for jellyfish and eat them as if they were food. Many youth in the camp went home to educate their parents that they need to switch to cloth bags to help protect Florida's marine environment.

Even the horse project 4-H youth were educated at the Area F and State Horse show on how they can go green. All youth participating in the Horse shows entered the stall decorating competition and the theme was, "it's a green thing." It was very interesting walking the horse stalls and seeing hundreds of green tip posters decorating the horse barn.

The mission of 4-H is to teach youth life skills, leadership skills, and to be good citizens. Teaching youth to be sustainable and to leave the earth a better place will always be an on-going goal of the Lee County 4-H program.

Sustainable Fishing Practices

By Joy Hazell, Sea Grant Agent

Sustainable fishing can mean many different things to different people. Some anglers may practice 100% catch and release fishing, returning everything they catch to the estuary, river, lake or Gulf of Mexico while others may keep only what they and their family can eat. One definition of sustainability, used by Trout Unlimited is "using resources in such a manner that they will be available to future generations." In general sustainable fishing will have two components, 1. Fishing regulations, such as size limits, bag limits and closed seasons ground in good science and 2. Techniques, tools and practices that increase the chances of survival of released fish and protect valuable fisheries habitat.

Whether due to regulations or to a desire to protect a species more and more anglers are practicing catch and release fishing. Catch and release is an excellent tool for promoting the health of our fisheries stocks but the key is making sure the released fish survive. There are many tips and techniques you can use to properly handle and release saltwater fish.

- Handle the fish as little as possible and only with wet hands.
- If the fish needs to be taken out of the water to measure it, vent it, or remove the hook, support the weight of the fish horizontally avoiding its gill cover, mouth and eyes.
- Return the fish to the water as quickly as possible.

- If the hook is deep in the throat or stomach cut the line as close as possible to the hook – the hook will eventually dissolve.
- If the fish is exhausted move it forward in the water with it's mouth open to revive it.
- Use a dehooking device to remove the hook quickly and safely.
- Use a venting tool when necessary to release gases trapped in the body cavity of the fish.
- Use non-offset circle hooks when using live or cut bait – this decreases the chances of gut hooking a fish.

Other techniques that can be used at home or on the water will help protect habitat for fish to live, breed and feed in.

- Bring all of your garbage and fishing line back with you.
- If possible recycle your monofilament line at a monofilament recycling bin.
- Pole or use a trolling motor when running over seagrass beds.

Remember, sustainable anglers strive for 100% survival of released fish and do their part to preserve our marine fisheries for future generations while enjoying their outdoor experiences.

VIEW OUR LATEST IFAS
University of FL Publications

We are listing publications which have undergone major revisions in 2008.

Find these publications on:
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES:

FCS 3270 - Fluorescent Lighting

FCS 3271 - An Introduction to Carbon Footprints

FCS 3227 - How to Prevent Foreclosure on your home

FCS 7012 - Money and Marriage: A Spending Plan

FCS 8670/FY1060 - Family Nutrition: A Recipe for Good Communication

FLORIDA YARDS AND NEIGHBORHOODS:

WQ144 - Frequently Asked Questions about: Florida Friendly Landscaping

WQ142 - Irrigation for Florida-Friendly Landscaping Ordinances

WQ143 - Fertilization for Florida Friendly Landscaping

AGRICULTURE:

CH199 - Citrus Canker: An Established Infection in the Florida Citrus Industry

FE714 - Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

4-H:

AEC-393/WC074 Creating Interest in Learners

Also find us at:
Solutionsforyourlife.com



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4-H

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SunTrust
Appt. by Comm. Judah

Ordinance Mandates Education for Lee County Landscapers

Stephen H. Brown, Horticulture Agent

On May 13, 2008 the Lee County Board of County Commissioners adopted a landscape management and fertilizer use ordinance covering unincorporated areas of Lee County. The ordinance does not cover incorporated areas of Lee County such as the City of Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel. The ordinance does cover an estimated 2000 landscape businesses in Lee County and their various employees. The intent of the ordinance is the protection of our waterways including ponds, lakes, rivers, estuaries, and the Gulf of Mexico from fertilizer and other landscape pollutants that may enter these waterbodies. Landscape pollutants may contribute to the increased frequencies of algae and red tides in our waterways. Thus, the May 13 ordinance applies a combination of rules and education to help in the reduction of landscape pollutants. On the latter, the ordinance makes it mandatory for landscapers to be trained in Landscape Best Management Practices (BMP). It also specifies that Lee County Extension is responsible for this training. At the end of the six-hour training, landscapers are tested on their knowledge of BMP and the exams are sent to the University of Florida for grading and issuance of certificates for those whom have passed the exams. So far, Lee County Extension Agents have trained more than 300 landscapers in the

required course. Approximately 96 percent of participants passed the exam and became certified in Landscape BMP. The certificate of completion is recognized by most municipalities in the state of Florida.

The rules of the ordinance apply to all residents of unincorporated Lee County. That includes the removal of fertilizer and grass clipping from impervious surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks. However, homeowners are not required to take the landscaper's certification course. They are encouraged, however, to participate in Florida's Yards and Neighborhood (FYN) program that provides horticulture education to Lee County homeowners.

Here are some stipulations of the May 13 Ordinance.

- There will be a one-year implementation period before enforcement of this ordinance begins.
- All professional landscaping business shall have at least one BMP certified employee.
- All professional landscaping businesses shall ensure that at least one BMP certified landscaper is on site while fertilizer is being applied.

150 YEARS OF KNOWLEDGE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

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

Lee County Extension Office

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

University of Florida's Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS)

<http://ifas.ufl.edu>

University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences with links to other land grant universities throughout the U.S.

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

University of Florida's Impact Magazine

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

Links to University of Florida's 17 research centers

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