PALM PRINTS

The quarterly newsletter of the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program for Community Associations

Vol. 10, No 2. October–December 2010

Why Conserve Water in The Landscape?

It may be surprising to learn that rainfall in Sarasota County does not contribute to the utility’s drinking-water supply. A dense layer of clay, called the Venice Clay Layer prevents rainfall from reaching the zones of water storage, or aquifers, which lie deep underground. Most public supply wells draw water from the Upper Floridan Aquifer, which is the deepest aquifer used for drinking water. The only local exception is Englewood Water District, which draws a portion of its supply from the surficial aquifer.

The clay layer allows us to pump drinking water from the intermediate and Upper Floridan aquifers without affecting the water level in lakes and rivers. However, this also means that receiving a lot of rainfall in Sarasota County does not replenish our drinking water to the same extent. Rainfall in DeSoto and Highland counties contributes to our drinking-water aquifers. Our surface water supplies, including Lake Manatee and the Peace River, depend on rainfall in Manatee, DeSoto, Hardee and Polk counties.

With an almost “normal” rainy season, it seems that there is more than enough water. It is easy to forget last year’s drought from which the aquifers are slowly recovering. During that drought, once-weekly watering restrictions were established region-wide by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and are being continued locally by Sarasota County Government, see http://www.scgov.net/EnvironmentalServices/Water/Conservation/WaterRestrictions.asp

Many people wonder why restrictions are still in place. The reason is that drought conditions are a cyclical fact of life in southwest Florida, and we must prepare our landscapes for these extended dry spells. While we are able to “bank” drinking water for the next drought by storing treated water from the Peace River plant in large volumes underground, to use that precious drinking water for irrigating lawns would be unwise and expensive.

Whether you use the public water supply or a well for irrigation, you can help prepare for the next drought by getting your landscape ready to survive and even flourish with less irrigation. By using the right plant in the right location, and selecting drought-tolerant trees, shrubs and grasses, your landscape will be able to thrive with rainfall and survive without it.

At this time of year, the temperatures will start going down and so will the water demands of your plants. It is important to adjust your irrigation system during the cool season. From December until the 1st of March, irrigation controllers for watering lawns should be set for a lower watering frequency, for every 10-14 days irrigation rather than weekly. Watering less frequently promotes deeper, more extensive root systems that help plants resist droughts. Also, over-watering can cause pest or fungus problems and lead to increased chemical use. These chemicals are carried by rain to streams and bays, damaging sensitive ecosystems.

While county ordinance requires new developments to install drought-resistant landscapes, it relies on homeowners in established neighborhoods to consider changing water-wasting landscapes. The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program can assist you. For more information visit our website at http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu?FYN/fyn.shtml

http://www.scgov.net/EnvironmentalServices/Water/Conservation/WaterRestrictions.asp

Shaded area represents potential planting range

**Juniperus silicicola**
Southern Red Cedar

The dense growth and attractive foliage make Southern Red Cedar a favorite for windbreaks, screens, and wild-life cover for large-scale landscapes. Southern Red Cedar can reach a height of approximately 40 feet. This densely-foliated, wide pyramidal, columnar or oval evergreen tree grows fairly quickly. Some individual plants grow wider than tall as they grow older. Mature specimens of Southern Red Cedar take on a flat-topped, almost windswept appearance, making them look very picturesque. Bark and trunk on older specimens take on a delightful, ‘old-tree’ look in informal groupings of varying size, and is ideal for seaside locations. This tree requires full sun or part shade/part sun. It has a wide soil tolerance and is very drought tolerant and salt tolerant. This high salt tolerance makes it ideal for seaside locations. Red Cedar makes a nice Christmas tree and the fragrant wood is used for repelling insects. Although not often used as a street tree, its wood is strong, the foliage clean, and the fruit is small. With proper pruning to remove the lower branches, Southern Red Cedar should adapt well to street-scapes. The growth of Southern Red Cedar may be poor in landscapes which are over-irrigated. This tree needs to be watered until it is well-established, after that you may forget about it. It performs admirably with no care, and usually insects and diseases are not a problem. For more information on this and other trees, visit this website: [http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees](http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees), where fact sheets of more than 600 trees can be found.

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### GENERAL INFORMATION:

**Scientific name:** *Juniperus silicicola*

**Pronunciation:** joo-NIP-erus sill-liss-sih-KOLE-uh

**Common name:** Southern Red Cedar

**Family:** Cupressaceae

**Origin:** native to North America

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### Seasonal color in the Landscape

The shortened day length is affecting some of our native plants. However, because our temperatures remain high, the anticipated autumn colors will be minimal. Leaves are showing some color change on wild grape (*Vitis* spp.), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), pop ash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*), red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), persimmon (* Diospyros virginiana*), sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*), and sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) trees. The warm weather is also promoting new growth and extending flowering periods for many plants.

**Native flowers in bloom now:**

- Beach sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*),
- yellow cannas (*Canna flaccida*),
- coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*),
- gaillardia (*Gaillardia pulchella*),
- goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*),
- horsemint (*Monarda punctata*),
- maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*),
- mimosa (*Mimosa strigillosa*),
- painted-leaf poinsettia (*Poinsettia cyathophora*),
- pineland heliotrope (*Heliotropium polyphyllum*),
- pineland lantana (*Lantana depressa*),
- scarlet sage (*Salvia coccinea*),
- blue porterweed (*Stachyurapheta jamaicensis*),
- scorpion-tail (*Heliotropium angiospermum*),
- spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*),
- Tampa vervain (*Glandularia tampensis*),
- wild sage (*Lantana involucrata*),
- yellowtop (*Flaveria linearis*)

**Native shrubs in bloom now:**

- Privet cassia (*Cassia ligustrina*),
- firebush (*Hamelia patens*),
- necklace pod (*Sophora tomentosa*)

**Native plants with fruit or berries:**

- Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*),
- coontie (*Zamia pumila*),
- fiddlewood (*Citharexylum fruticosum*),
- hollies (*Ilex spp.*),
- quailberry (*Crossapetalum illicifolium*),
- rouge plant (*Rivina humilis*),
- Simpson’s stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans*),
- Walter’s viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*),
- wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*).
## CALENDAR
To register, search for more classes or check class descriptions, please visit our website at [http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu](http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu); click on Education Calendar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Gulf Gate Library</td>
<td>Landscaping for Birds – Annemarie Post</td>
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<td>October 2</td>
<td>1:00pm</td>
<td>Orange Blossom Community Garden</td>
<td>“First Saturdays” Class on Organic Vegetable Gardening</td>
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<td>October 5</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>North Port Library</td>
<td>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard – MG Yard Advisors</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td>1:00pm</td>
<td>Twin Lakes Park</td>
<td>Eat Smart, Energize Your Life – Maria Portelos-Rometo</td>
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<td>October 7</td>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Venice Library</td>
<td>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles – MG Yard Advisors</td>
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<td>October 9</td>
<td>10:30am</td>
<td>Longwood Park</td>
<td>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles – Angela Antonucci</td>
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<td>October 12</td>
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<td>Twin Lakes Park</td>
<td>Butterfly Predators – Fred Santana</td>
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<td>St. Wilfred Episcopal Church</td>
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<td>Energy Incentives for Homeowners – Betty Alpaugh</td>
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<td>Irrigation 101 – Angela Antonucci</td>
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<td>Rain Barrel Workshop – Angela Antonucci</td>
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<td>Laurel Community Garden</td>
<td>Organic Vegetable Gardening – John Liddy</td>
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<td>October 19</td>
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<td>Ants, Ants, Ants – Fred Santana</td>
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<td>Why Landscapes Fail – Master Gardener Volunteer</td>
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<td>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles – MG Yard Advisors</td>
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<td>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard – MG Yard Advisors</td>
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<td>November 4</td>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Shamrock Park</td>
<td>Florida’s Buggy Critters; The Good, the Bad, the Ugly – Fred Santana</td>
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<td>November 5</td>
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<td>Gulf Gate Library</td>
<td>Creating Wildlife Habitat In and Around Urban Ponds – Annemarie Post</td>
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<td>Orange Blossom Community Garden</td>
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<td>November 9</td>
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<td>St. Wilfred Episcopal Church</td>
<td>Rain Barres – Angela Antonucci</td>
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<td>November 15</td>
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<td>Fruitville Library</td>
<td>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles – MG Yard Advisors</td>
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<td>November 16</td>
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<td>Twin Lakes Park</td>
<td>Partnering with Pollinators – Fred Santana</td>
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<td>November 17</td>
<td>10:00am</td>
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<td>Holiday Plants – Master Gardener Volunteer</td>
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<td>Stretching Your Food Dollar – Maria Portelos-Rometo</td>
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<td>November 18</td>
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<td>Shamrock Park</td>
<td>Landscaping to Attract Birds – Annemarie Post</td>
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### Grant Information
The Community Education Grant program from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) offers grants up to $5,000 each. The categories are: flood protection, natural systems, water conservation, water quality and watersheds. The deadline for 2011 submission has passed. However, information for awards and future grant cycles will be available at [www.WaterMatters.org/communitygrants](http://www.WaterMatters.org/communitygrants).

Applications for the next Sarasota County Neighborhood Grant cycle are due October 1, 2010. The Grant will only fund landscaping projects that conform to Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles. For more information about this program, visit [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net). For more information about Florida-Friendly landscaping, contact Annemarie Post (see contact info below).

The Bay Partners Grants, available from the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, promote environmental education, awareness, community involvement and stewardship. For more information, visit [www.sarasotabay.org](http://www.sarasotabay.org).

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Current Resident or

PLANT SALES

Sarasota County Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale
Saturday, October 9, 2010
8:00am – 2:00pm
Bee Ridge Park (Corner Wilkinson Rd. and S. Lockwood Ridge Rd)
For more information call: 364-5838 or 321-6329

Native Plant Sale
Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
Saturday, October 9, 2010
9:00am – 2:00pm
Longwood Run Park (off University Parkway)
For more information call: 794-8773 or 955-8085