

Implementation of Florida-Friendly Landscaping Principles Across an Urban Landscape as a Catalyst For Reduction in Factors Contributing to Climate Change

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The Broward County Interagency Climate Change Task Force recently produced its "*Broward County Government Operations Climate Change Action Plan.*" During formulation of the Plan, a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory was conducted that included: 1) Buildings/Facilities; 2) Vehicle Fleet; 3) Employee Commute; 4) Street Lighting; 5) Water/Sewage; 6) Waste; 7) Outreach & Educational Programs; 8) Sustainability; 9) Green Procurement/Green IT; 10) Other Ideas. Activities related to the UF-IFAS/Broward County Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program fell into both the Sustainability and Outreach & Educational Programs categories.

Among Sustainability activities, Certification/Recertification of Florida Master Gardeners of Broward County was found to be significant owing to the high volume of activities carried out by the 130 active Master Gardeners, who donated nearly 6,000 hours during 2007. Master Gardeners responded to the Public Answer Hotline, which consists of two telephone answering desk stations at the Broward County Extension Office as well as an email: MasterGardener@broward.org and reception of walk-in visitors. During 2007, this combined effort permitted the Gardeners to assist nearly 11,000 residents with landscape selection and design as well as proper fertilization and Integrated Pest Management Protocols. That service figure represents a 100% increase in service over 2006. Another element of landscape sustainability lies with the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods as a component of Broward NatureScape, a program carried out jointly with the Broward County Environmental Protection Department. NatureScape has thus far certified 85 Broward County Facilities, and 1,854 other landscapes.

In the Educational and Outreach category, UF-IFAS Extension's programs in Best Management Practices for sustainable landscapes, fertilizer, and Integrated Pest Management programs in Commercial and Urban Horticulture comprise twelve of the nineteen activities listed. UF-IFA/Broward County Extension's Mobile Extension Offices, run by Local Master Gardener Coordinators, are now active in 26 of Broward County's 33 cities. Through these Offices, Master Gardeners delivered programs to nearly 31,000 residents, an increase of over 35% in one year! Sustainable Florida-Friendly Landscape practices implement nine critical principles: 1) right plant right place; 2) water efficiently; 3) fertilize appropriately; 4) mulch; 5) attract wildlife; 6) manage yard pests responsibly; 7) recycle yard waste; 8) reduce storm runoff; and 9) protect the waterfront. The principles have been incorporated into the Landscape Maintenance Module of the Florida Green Building Coalition's Green Local Government Standard <http://www.floridagreenbuilding.org/db/standards/govs>. Commercial Horticulture Programs teach nearly 12,000 industrial, municipal and county-employed personnel in the same BMPs as listed above. Nearly 4,000 landscape contractors and inspectors received intensive training and the program held intensive water use studies to assist over 40 major nurseries (who serve over 50,000) residents conserve large amounts of water, prevent nutrient and pesticide runoff. Finally, the program identified over 500 critical pest samples that permitted their local eradication.

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