Demonstration Gardens as Educational Tools

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South Dade Government Center
Since 2002...

- Joint effort by the FYN program and the SFWMD.
- Renovated in 2008.
- Atala butterfly colony successfully established.
Insert map of Florida with arrow moving north to south…

Talk about number of demo gardens all across the state.
Significance of Demonstration Gardens

- Community development & culture
- Conservation & research
- Education
- Economy & tourism
- Personal development
- Marketing and promotion
Community Development/Culture

- Reflect the character of a place
- Provide arena for discussion about sustainability
- Create local partnerships
- Add to the quality of life
- Offer venues for special occasions
Nassau County

10-12 public education classes per year

- Micro-irrigation
- Plant propagation
- “Right Plant/Right Place”
- Butterfly gardening
- Pruning classes
- And more…
Nassau County

• “At-Risk” students
• Individuals with developmental disabilities
• Nassau County residents and newcomers
• Public school students and teachers
• Homeschoolers
• Nassau County Commissioners, County staff, management, and businesses that frequent the County offices for business transactions.
Flagler County
Since 2006...

• Annual open house – "Garden Showcase".
  • MG's stationed at each of the 9 gardens
  • FYN principles’ signage throughout the landscape.
• Funded by the Flagler County BOCC – $1,500 per year for landscape projects
• All the gardens were designed by our MG's and FYN Coordinator
• Maintained by 15 MG's every week.
Manatee County

• 2 demonstration gardens – Extension Office and Palmetto Public Library.
• Managed by County Parks & Recreation
• Pending demonstration landscape at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall.
Polk County
Since 2002...

- 4 demonstration garden sites
  - Polk Outpost 27
  - Polk County Utilities
  - Polk Training Center Nursery
  - Polk County Extension Service
- Plant i.d. labels and nine principles signs
- Open to guided tours upon request
- Workshops and Master Gardener training
- Tours given at yearly garden festivals.
Conservation & Research

- Local biodiversity and land preservation
- Provide a “living lab”
South Dade Government Center

It took 6 years for Coontie (*Zamia floridana*) to grow large enough to support a colony of Atala butterflies (*Eumaeus atala florida*)
Florida Botanical Gardens
Since 2001...

- Passive and active educational opportunities
  Schools tours, Self-guided tours, Web-based information

- Funding
  - Eastside Gardens -- "Penny for Pinellas" voluntary sales tax fund.
  - Ponds, site infrastructure and McKay Creek -- Public Works

- Used to illustrate water savings from Florida-friendly landscaping practices.
Restoring a Habitat

A Gift to Florida’s Nature
In 2006, the Florida Botanical Gardens was awarded a grant to restore 60 acres of our 120 acre property to its original wild state.

We are stewards of this land, which includes a wonderful diversity of habitat types from uplands to wetlands, pine flatwoods to oak hammocks.

These sensitive ecosystems support a wealth of native Florida plants and animals, but they have been severely disturbed by human activity. This photo shows the site as it was—overgrown and too dense to support much diversity.

Following the initial clearing, volunteers helped install thousands of native plants (above) and scattered wildflower seed (below).

The reintroduced native plants will provide food and habitat for our diverse wildlife.

Listen for northern bobwhite, admire the palmetto and the Florida false sunflower.

One day a young pine tree planted here may host a nesting pair of bald eagles.

The pine flatwoods and oak hammock communities were severely compromised due to human activities around a former home site, including cattle grazing, pine forestry, and ornamental horticulture.

We removed invasive exotic plant species displacing our natives. Melaleuca (punk trees), Brazilian pepper and air potato are a few of the exotic species we removed. This will be a continuous battle.

Through restoration efforts we have mimicked the most important natural element missing from the pine flatwoods. Fire. This was done by reducing the overgrown palmetto and oaks, just as a fire would do.

Giving Back to Nature
Education

- Outdoor classroom
- Connect education and conservation
Welcome to the Florida Botanical Gardens

Discover How Florida Grows Everyday

The Florida Botanical Gardens inspires and educates visitors by showcasing flora, fauna and natural resources in motivational surroundings that promote environmentally friendly techniques.

Bring the family and spend a day. The Gardens are open every day of the year and admission is free!

New! join us for the grand opening of the Children's Trail on November 1st

Garden Map

With over 30 acres of cultivated gardens and 90 acres of natural areas, the Florida Botanical Gardens are a unique local treasure. more

What's in Bloom

Learn about hundreds of flowering plants by common and scientific names, color and what time of year they bloom. more
St. Lucie County
Since 2003...

- Signage and tours
- Informational brochure
- Indian River REC
- Designing for Curb Appeal
- 3000 people in 2007
Hillsborough County
Since 1998...

• Butterfly/perennial garden
• Bette S Walker Discovery Garden
Economy & Tourism

- Cultural attraction
- Strengthens the local economy
- Attract tourists
- Elevate public perception
Florida Botanical Gardens
Personal Development

- Refuge from everyday distractions
- Inspiration
- Environmental stewardship
- Safe, beautiful places to visit
Citrus County
Since 2000...

• County Library – 2000
• Citrus County Canning Center – 2004
• County Extension Office – 2005
Sarasota County
Calusa Lakes

• 1500 ft² area; Drought-tolerant plants and micro-irrigation
• Plant ID signage
• Observed water savings = 179,400,000 gallons annually.
The Challenges Ahead...
Marketing and Promotion

• Raise awareness of Extension
• Showcase public and private partnerships
• Become a necessary resource
Thank You!

Any Questions?