PLANTING STORMWATER PONDS: DETERMINING THE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN BUFFER ZONE AREAS

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Selecting stormwater pond buffer zone plants is more challenging than selecting plants for a conventional landscape. Site conditions can vary greatly and are more difficult to control. Steep slopes can make plant establishment and retention difficult. The Florida-Friendly Landscaping principle of using the right plant in the right place is particularly important in the shoreline environment because the planting area includes a dry slope and areas that can be inundated with water during frequent rain events.

Planted stormwater pond buffer zones help to absorb nutrients and provide wildlife habitat. The buffer zone areas often contains the slope of the bank leading to the water's edge. This area can present challenges for the establishment of a low-maintenance plant buffer zone, sometimes referred to as no-mow zones. The plant buffer functions as a protective barrier by reducing or preventing fertilizer runoff and grass clippings from entering the pond.

Collaborators on this project have a sincere interest in protecting downstream water resources and have been working together with landscape maintenance and stormwater pond maintenance contractors to define best management practices pertaining to installation and maintenance in planted stormwater pond buffer zone areas.

PRESENTER BIO: Michelle is an Extension Agent with 13 years of experience. Michelle focuses her work on water quality and conservation through teaching a variety of programs to residents and landscape professionals on these topics. Michelle also focuses some attention to stormwater ponds and their water quality issues.