

**Public Invited to Jan. 27
Workshop About Native Plants
At SFCC Hardee Campus**

Anyone interested in seeing, feeling, and smelling Florida native plants appropriate for residential and commercial landscapes is invited to a Florida Friendly Plants Workshop and Plant Sale Saturday, Jan. 27 from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Hardee Campus of South Florida Community College. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

The workshop is free and open to the public. Each participant will be given a gallon-sized native plant. Refreshments will be provided, as well as practical reference documents provided by event sponsors. There will be limited door prizes of rain barrels, and coupons offered by a local nursery specializing in native plant material.

This event is offered in partnership with Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, the Peace River Basin Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, SFCC, DeSoto County Parks and Recreation, Pine Lily Nursery, Deluxe Trees and Shrubs, and many others.

Florida friendly plant landscapes can be beautiful, conserve water, protect the environment, provide more dependable wildlife habitat and are generally maintenance free, compared to the more familiar species commonly planted in Florida's subtropical regions. These plants are already adapted to Florida's poor soils, tolerate the state's high winds, heavy rainfalls and dry periods, tend to be more maintenance free, and don't require the high level of fertilizers, pesticides or water typically used to maintain unadapted species.

If selected correctly for the right landscape, Florida friendly plants can help create a sustainable environment for both home and commercial areas. They can also provide much-

needed habitat for Florida wildlife, including hummingbirds and butterflies – which further enhance the landscape.

Among those scheduled to give presentations are commercial growers of Florida-friendly and native plants, who will share their decades of personal experience with adapted plant material that is all around us, yet remains a novel sight in planned landscapes. SFCC's Hardee campus has been planted with native plants and serves as an ongoing demonstration site for visitors.

William Bissett of Davenport and owner of The Natives Nursery will lead a discussion on landscape design. Bissett is a registered Florida landscape architect who designs and consults for state agencies, commercial interests and homeowners. He is credited with influencing the change in the integration of new plant materials in central Florida landscapes, including those maintained by the Disney Company and the Florida Department of Transportation. He has received several state awards for his designs and industry contributions.

Each event partner will provide participants with take-home material, including the Peace River Basin Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, which will provide handbooks and plant lists from the district's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program.

The agenda includes an overview of the principles of creating Florida-Friendly yards, a discussion of how even small neighborhood parcels contribute to watershed health, and a review of samples of Florida friendly landscapes.

Participants will be treated to an interactive presentation showing how Florida-friendly plants can be integrated into a home landscape. Visitors will be invited to buy additional specimens of native plants brought to the workshop by operators of local native plant nurseries,

Pine Lily Nursery and Deluxe Trees and Shrubs. Professional growers from both will be on hand to answer questions about the use of specific plants participants may want to try at home.

Local business owner Randall Hand, owner of Sun State Landscaping, will conclude the program by providing participants with information on available careers in landscaping.

The campus demonstration site includes plantings of wild allamanda, greeneyes, salvia coccinea, native porterweed, wiregrass, pineland dropseed, native basil, goldenrod, coontie, pennyroyal, wax myrtle, pineland heliotrope, rusty lyonia, and bluestem. Maps identifying the plants will be available.

For more information and the scheduled agenda for the Jan. 27 workshop, contact the SFCC Hardee campus at (863) 773-3081 or visit the Web site www.CHNEP.org.

The SFCC Hardee campus is located 4.1 miles north of Wauchula, at 2968 U.S. 17 North, Bowling Green. The same sponsors are offering a similar workshop on Feb. 3, at SFCC's DeSoto campus in Arcadia.