

END OF SUMMARY

Below are additional details, if you are to know.

Significant documents & updates are posted to the Council website Initiative page (linked from the Council homepage) in the section: "COUNCIL INITIATIVE 1, Promoting landscaping with native plants." Check there to browse documents and find recent information. The current list of work group participants:

Richard Brownscombe (lead), Broward
Carol Sullivan, Sparkleberry
David Martin, Eugenia
Janet Bowers, Suncoast
Sonya Guidry, Paw Paw
Neta Villalobos Bell, Cuplet Fern
Jon Popisil, Lake Beautyberry
Sandi Saurers, Paynes Prairie
George Waters, Sea Oats
Linda Schneider, Ixia
Keely Coulter, Heartland
Donna Bollenbach (graphic design), Suncoast

PROGRAM VISION FOR GARDENING AIDES REMAIN ON TARGET

The Work Plan was completed and presented prior to the Horseshoe Lake Board Meeting. It will no doubt be revised to reflect decisions the work group makes as it works to move the program from vision to reality. In general the group now has the same focus as the original Work Plan. Details, emphasis, and process have evolved a bit, as noted below.

BROCHURE & WORKSHOP DEVELOPED AT THE SAME TIME

Most particularly, the group has decided that it makes more sense to develop the workshop simultaneously with the brochures. In part because the workshops are seen by some to be the more valuable piece and some chapters already have local plant lists. The brochure has lots of limitations of space and content, so there is a natural tendency to want to put important gardening material in the workshop when they can't fit in the brochure.

COMMENTS & CRITICISM MORE PROJECT FORWARD

We had a conference call in October. On the whole it was rather difficult because of the extraneous noises, difficulty to tell who is speaking, and so many of us are unfamiliar with it for communication. Nevertheless, it seemed to spur a flurry of emails afterward that cleared up a number of important questions. The emails make obvious how many different perceptions of the plan our many participants have. And some participants have rather strong opinions regarding it all. That actually has been a great asset, since it expresses how much we care to get it right. Most of the time, these misunderstandings about the plan uncover some shortcoming in the plan or the process.

10 PLANT REGIONS

One such discussion was around plant regions: ten regions statewide are proposed. Plant regions have nothing to do with geographical or political regions, including Chapter areas. The main concern is the complexity it adds to the program to have so many versions, and the other concern is how much they overlap. In the end, all the trouble seems to be thought worth it to

create guides that are locally relevant. Local relevance is partly the issue of plant availability and, of course, reflects the species that grow in local plant communities naturally.

DESIGN LAYOUT OF THE BROCHURE PLANT LIST

Donna Bollenbach offered her graphic design services to help the program along. At the beginning of October she submitted a layout for the plant list. Because “right plant, right place” is important to successful native gardening, we proposed 9 plant “places” defined from sunny-dry to shady-wet. This layout of the inside page of a large map-like brochure helped more than anything to get us thinking along similar lines and to begin to ask the important questions about which plants and information should be on the list.

PLANT LIST FOR THE CENTRAL WEST COAST

Janet Bower of Suncoast has been working with Donna and has developed a plant list for the Central West Coast plant region. All this work and lots of emails pointed to the need for criteria for the plants listed in the brochure: hearty, available, avoid large trees that can cause expensive problems when impulsively located, avoid poisons plants, emphasize plants found in local natural plant communities, and that sort of thing. Some participants suggested avoiding short-lived and short-season plants in favor of those more likely to look good in an urban setting and to last for many years after planting.

NEW BROCHURE PROTOTYPE FOR NOVEMBER

Donna is working on a complete layout, a draft of course, for the Disney Wilderness Preserve meetings November 15. Likely we can come to consensus around more of the brochure content at that meeting.

FIRST BROCHURE TEMPLATE FOR ALL REGIONS

Keep in mind that this first brochure will become a model in its graphic design and in criteria for content for all ten plant region versions. It may also establish some design basis for the workshops as well. All this is yet to be discussed in detail, but will get attention in November.

THE BROCHURE TARGET GROUP

We have a proposal on the table to do a focus group of about ten people to see if the brochure actually has the anticipated effect of helping gardeners plant natives successfully. We also need a clear focus on who we are preparing the brochure for. One description of our target gardener: the person who is already convinced they want native plants; the person who is either new to native gardening (but not gardening in general) or has had some trouble with native plants; or the gardener who has started a native garden and wants to know what to plant next.

THANK YOU

At some point or another I believe every participant has contributed suggestions or materials. This and some really hard work by a few have moved the program along faster than this leader expected. This all comes from a lot of heart and work, so let it be known that we very much appreciate all the comments, criticisms, documents, lists, examples, and work everyone has contributed.