

Free butterfly plants with native-garden tour in Palm Beach on Sunday



VSee 20,000 butterflies at the largest butterfly park in the world in Coconut Creek.

Hurricane Irma really beat up South Florida gardens, but native plants, which create a sustainable habitat for butterflies, birds and other wildlife, bounced right back after the storm.

Get an up-close look and learn about using native species in your landscape on an Oct. 1 garden tour sponsored by the **Palm Beach County Chapter of the**

Florida Native Plant Society. The self-guided driving tour of eight unique gardens in Palm Beach County is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“After Hurricane Irma, we can clearly see that survival of our landscapes and the food web they support are dependent on **planting the right native plants in the right place**,” says Susan Lerner, president of the nonprofit society. “The tour will drive home the point that natives are the gateway to sustainability and critical for protecting our coastlines and our inland developed areas.”

And they’re pretty, too.

Guides and master gardeners will be stationed at each stop to answer questions. Most plants are labeled. Bring your camera. There also is a photo contest with prizes. Proceeds support the society’s work planting natives at Habitat for Humanity homes built in **Palm Beach County**, as well as community outreach and advocacy work, Lerner says.



This year’s tour is being presented in partnership with Audubon Everglades and the Atala Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. As a bonus, the first 300 households will receive a free bird and butterfly habitat, which includes a corkystem passionvine and a firebush.

In an effort to educate about the benefits of native gardening in urban landscapes, parks and other public spaces, the society also is simultaneously holding an invitation-only private bus tour for elected officials and municipal and county staff to visit three urban landscapes. Participants include South Palm Beach mayor Bernice Fisher, Lake Park mayor Michael O'Rourke, Richard Stowe, chair of the Lake Worth tree board, and Christine Nagy of the Hypoluxo town council. That tour will visit a new pocket park at South Dixie Highway and Fern Street in West Palm Beach and a hammock at Hypoluxo's town hall, which also is a stop on the public tour.

The society's aim is to help elected officials understand that new city ordinances should require a higher percentage of native flora to compensate for what is being lost as development removes wild areas, Lerner says.

The low-maintenance plants require less fertilizer, improve water quality and create habitat for critters and beneficial insects.

Give the heave-ho to invasive, exotic plants and

"There are native plants for shady, sunny, wet and dry areas," says Lerner. "The tour will show a wide variety of habitats and plants to fit them."

Info: \$10 tickets (cash or check only) are available at each home on Oct. 1. Call 561-247-3677 or PalmBeach.fnpsects.org/2017-annual-native-plant-garden-tour.

Roberts Garden

6708 Pamela Lane, West Palm Beach

Carol Roberts wanted a garden that would attract wildlife and conserve water, so Florida's native plants were an obvious choice. Most of the plants chosen

are host plants or nectar plants for butterflies and it is a busy oasis for bees and birds. Of special note are the red-blooming, spiky cardinal flowers.

Wasser Garden

1511 20th Ave. North, Lake Worth

The Wasser Garden, a stop on the tour four years ago, looks like it's been there forever and brings the woodsy essence of Florida's natural areas right to the front door. The grassy path along the east side of the house is lined with tall goldenrod spikes, dune sunflower, spotted bee-balm, scorpion's tail, gaillardia, yellowtop and other colorful wildflowers.



McVoy Garden: Fruit trees and herbs are placed among the natives. (Susan Lerner / Courtesy)

McVoy Garden

1514 15th Ave. North, Lake Worth

This turfless front-yard garden features fruit trees and herbs tucked among the natives. Zebra longwing and Julia butterflies flutter about as red and yellow Atala caterpillars munch on coonties, and bees enjoy the ever-changing flowers in bloom.



Renninger Garden: This native yard was started to attract birds and reduce water use. (Susan Lerner / Courtesy)

Renninger Garden

1629 N. N St., Lake Worth

This native yard began with the modest planting 15 years ago of a live oak, wild coffee, Simpson stoppers and cocoplum. The initial plan was to attract birds and reduce water use, and it has morphed into a colorful butterfly habitat and wildflower garden.



Eden Place Healing Arts Garden: Florida natives were chosen to surround the office because the flowers, berries and butterflies create the perfect ambiance for healing. (Susan Lerner / Courtesy)

Eden Place Healing Arts Garden

1423 N. Federal Highway, Lake Worth

Florida natives such as firebush, Jamaican caper, scorpion's tail and coral honeysuckle were chosen because flowers, berries and butterflies create the perfect ambiance for healing. Hopefully, the gorgeous flower of the native maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*), which is the center's logo, will be in bloom.



A Julia butterfly visits a pineland strongbark. (Susan Lerner / Courtesy)

Isabell Garden

412 S. L St., Lake Worth

Sandy Isabell's award-winning dooryard garden was featured on the 2013 tour when it was newly planted. It has matured beautifully, with its splendid variety of texture, form and color. Among the highlights are the Bahama strongbark with its white flowers and bright orange berries, a satinleaf, with its graceful branches and richly colored leaves, and the handsome silvery gray sea-lavender.

Hypoluxo Hammock at town hall

7580 S. Federal Highway, Hypoluxo

The goal of this garden, dedicated in 1996, was to re-create the site as it would have looked 100 years ago as the Barefoot Mailman began his trek to Miami. The native species used require no irrigation or fertilizer after they were established. The design also incorporated drainage to retain rain runoff.



Judd Garden: More than 120 native plant species are home to the lively birds, butterflies, pollinators and other creatures thriving here. (Susan Lerner / Courtesy)

Judd Garden

509 S. Country Club Drive, Atlantis

More than 120 native plant species are home to birds, butterflies, pollinators and countless other creatures thriving and "making a living" here in this nearly half-acre yard. This home also is the location for the plant giveaway.

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