

Wildlife Cover Enhancement



Creating a feeding station to attract wildlife is easy and rewarding at Tampa Palms G&CC.

BY GREG PLOTNER, CGCS

TAMPA PALMS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Consistent with Tampa Palms Golf & Country Club's goal to preserve and protect the natural beauty of the forested wetland environment found on and around the golf course, it is our commitment to use native materials as much as possible in helping to aid the abundant wildlife on our course to seek shelter, food and nesting sites.

The use of native plants is encouraged, as they blend in with the beauty of the course and require less maintenance than manmade landscape settings. Some of the native vegetation communities at Tampa Palms that provide valuable cover and food sources for the variety of wildlife on the course are as follows:

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)

Provides an abundance of cover for many species of wildlife. Spring flowers provide nectar for honeybees and the fruit is eaten by several bird species.

Sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*)

Provides cover for wading birds looking for food, and its seeds are eaten by some birds.

We also have an abundance of pickerelweed, bulrush and cordgrass (listed previously under aquatic plants).

These are a few of the valuable native plant communities that are present on the course at

Tampa Palms. Try experimenting with some of these plants in your next landscaping effort. The results will speak for themselves.

Why Use Native Plants?

They have been around a long time and are well adapted to the Florida environment. This means less water and maintenance is required relative to ornamentals. Native plants also offer the best food sources for wildlife as well as help preserve Florida's natural heritage.

Anytime you are planting material on your golf course, consider its value to wildlife. Does it provide a food source or cover? Try to provide a diversity (plant form, size & fruiting time) and stagger plantings so that food is provided year round.

A Note About Exotics

Exotics are foreign plants and animals imported and introduced into a new environment. The bad thing about exotics is that they have no natural enemies and they can quickly crowd out native species. Three exotics that cause problems, particularly in South Florida, are Brazilian peppers, Australian pines and Melaleucas. Melaleucas are a particular threat because they invade and overtake wetlands. In North Florida, Kudzu can overtake a small pine forest in only a few years.

The Answer? **Get Rid of Them!**

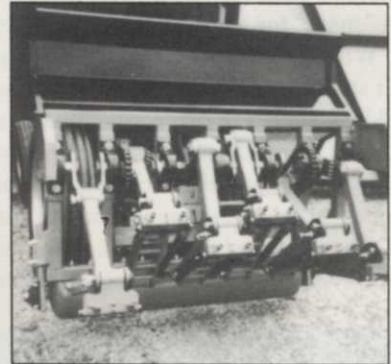


Using native plants provides food and cover for wildlife at Colliers Reserve CC

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