



give you an exact amount. I know we obviously use less fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation water, which all cost money. Those savings can be better spent on the more important parts of the golf course to make sure your golfers get good playing conditions and a good value for their money spent.

MIKE ANDERSON
Landscape Specialist

COLLIER'S RESERVE

Some Like It Hot; Others Don't Care

Over the past seven years I have had a lot of experience with installing native plants at Collier's Reserve. Just like any other plant, natives need to be used in the right location so they will do well.

Some like it wetter, sunnier, drier, and some just don't care where you put them. My experience tells me the following native plants work very well in the right low-maintenance situations.

Saw palmetto is one of the plants that really seem to be able to take whatever you throw at them: wet, dry, sunny, shade. Just get them established and forget about them. The green variety seems to grow relatively slowly compared to the silver, especially if they are getting only a little water.

Muhlygrass is a great low-maintenance, clump-type grass that gets to 3½ feet if it is doing stellar. One of the great things about this plant is that it gets beautiful pink inflorescences in the fall. This grass can take it really dry, but doesn't do well in shade.

Wiregrass is another great low-maintenance grass, but is not readily available. It gets to be approximately 2 feet at jumbo size. It will take more shade than muhlygrass, but still loves the sun.

Wax Myrtle is a great plant when used correctly. Grows fast, gets pretty bushy, is a great wildlife attractor, but too often is used incorrectly. Wax myrtle, it needs water. All too often they are planted on berms or elevated areas with poor to no irrigation. These are plants that perform best in areas that get plenty of water. Not necessarily standing water, but a good drink.

Beautyberry — I really like this plant, and so does the wildlife that loves to eat the

berries. It is easy to propagate from young seedlings or cuttings. This bush gets large and thick and once established, is relatively maintenance free.

Cocoplum makes a great hedge, but is cold sensitive. It works well in sun or shade, wet or dry but not too arid.

At Collier's Reserve we have almost 130 acres of preserve areas on the project. To control the broadleaf weeds in the natives, we have found that light rates of 2,4-D can be sprayed with no effect on the plant material. We use 0.5 oz. to 1 oz. per 1000 sq. ft. with Surflan and Gallery combo to prevent them from coming back in two weeks. This treatment usually gets us three to four months of control in our cordgrass berms. As far as pesticides go, natives really don't have a big problem. The pines sometimes get tip borers in the summer, and the Coontie occasionally gets some scale.

Our cultural practices have taken a more unconventional approach in the fact that we try to burn most of our native areas. I have a Prescribed Fire Manager's license from the Florida Department of Agriculture, and we have been doing controlled burns for about four years now. In the areas that we are unable to burn, we hand prune. All of our native areas that are along the edges of the fairways are considered lateral hazards. I will say that if you play golf at Collier's, you had better bring some extra balls, because once it goes in — it rarely comes out.

I often get asked if the native areas save money, and the answer is undeniably yes. Natives use a lot less water, often have very little if any insect and disease issues, they grow on their own in an infertile environment — so they use a lot less fertilizer, they require very little manpower to maintain, and maintenance is required extremely infrequently. When you compare that to bermudagrass, I think that it is easy to see the cost savings.

BILL DAVIDSON, GCS

SEVEN RIVERS G&CC

Natural Areas Serve Several Functions

Yesterday's meeting of the Southwest Florida Water Management District's

Green Industry Advisory Committee plays right into the message being delivered in this Hands-On topic.

Natural areas play several roles on a golf course for me and I have different forms of natural areas.

Some of these areas once were irrigated and through the installation of part-circle heads and actually removing a few more, we have been able to reduce water consumption to a small degree. It becomes a matter of educating your membership why these areas are beneficial.

1. Untouched areas: They provide areas for wildlife. Areas once maintained, not for play but just because it's grass and therefore we must mow them, have been allowed to return to nature, so to speak.

These areas consist of a couple of brush piles in low visibility areas which have been allowed to become overgrown with vegetation and a few open, out-of-the-way grassy areas. The red shoulder hawks love this area and frequently come away with a meal consisting of mice, snakes etc.

2. Pine straw areas: They require little maintenance, look nice and are actually playable once the straw has been packed down. A little Round-Up and Surflan combination may be needed to keep edges clean and weeds from popping up.

I plan at some time in the near future to create bunker-type areas around large oak trees and use coquina shell as the backfill. Gainesville C.C. has these areas and they solve the age-old problem of lousy turf under big, shady trees.

I find these types of areas an excellent opportunity to decrease maintenance to a degree and to conserve water. These areas do not need to be irrigated though they may have been at one time. Water is going to get scarce for landscape and golf course irrigation as growth and development continues.

You can conserve your current water allocations and redirect them to critical areas on the course by using more natural and native areas on your course.

STUART BOZEMAN, GCS