



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

E X T E N S I O N

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Miami-Dade County's Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Demonstration Landscapes

Demonstration landscapes represent one of the main components of the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FYN) Program in Miami-Dade County. Although the size, shape, and composition of the demonstration landscapes differ, they all have the following things in common: (1) they are always installed on public property or property that is readily accessible to the public; (2) they all illustrate 'Florida-friendly' landscaping principles; (3) they all utilize drought-tolerant, low-maintenance plants; (4) they all contain educational signage on the nine FYN principles; and (5) they either have no permanent irrigation systems, or they are fitted with microjet or similar low-volume systems.

Three FYN Demonstration Landscapes were installed in Miami-Dade County in 2001. Five more have been installed during the first half of 2002, and one more large project is currently being planned for later in the year. Additional photos of some of these Demonstration Landscapes can be viewed on the Miami-Dade FYN website, at <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/programs/fyn/fynphotos.htm>. The demonstration sites discussed herein are listed geographically from north to south.

North Dade Regional Library, 2455 NW 183rd St., Carol City

The first FYN Demonstration Landscape in Miami-Dade County was installed at North Dade Regional Library. This installation took place on April 15, 2001, as part of Team Metro's Neighborhood P.R.I.D.E. Week kickoff event. Team Metro solicited donations for all plant materials and mulch, and FYN provided the landscape plan and planting expertise. A week before the event, a backhoe was used to dig the holes and install the large palms and trees. On the day of the event, personnel from the Miami Job Corps, Team Metro, the Public Library System, and various other groups and individuals volunteered their time and effort to install the smaller plants and trees, and to spread mulch over the entire demonstration area. What was once a large plot of dead and dying grass strewn with litter was converted into a beautiful landscape—thereby permanently enhancing the aesthetic quality and attractiveness of the library grounds.



Biscayne Park Village Hall, 7th & NE 114th Street

Although the planning for this project began in mid-2001, the installation didn't take place until April 2002. The Village of Biscayne Park graciously paid for all the plant materials, and even hired a professional landscaping company to install them. FYN personnel worked with the Village and the landscapers to develop a beautiful native plant display that would effectively beautify the grounds around the log cabin style Village Hall, while also providing an educational experience for residents and visitors alike.



Citrus Grove Elementary School, 21st & NW 6th Street, Little Havana

This was the third FYN Demonstration Landscape in Miami-Dade County, and it was the first time that Citizens for a Better South Florida (CFABSF) teamed up with FYN on such a project. In fact, CFABSF purchased all of the plants and the mulch, and also hired a backhoe to scrape off all the existing turfgrass within the demonstration area and to dig the holes for the larger trees. CFABSF also directed the planning and organization of this large and highly successful event. Ironically, November 3, 2001, turned out to be a glorious day for gardening—even though Hurricane Michelle threatened south Florida with winds and rain. The Demonstration Landscape, which consists of over 250 individual plants of 33 species native to south Florida, is also being used as an outdoor classroom by the environmental science teachers at Citrus Grove.



SW South River Drive, East Little Havana

In April 2002, the East Little Havana Neighborhood Enhancement Team (*i.e.*, NET office) teamed up with FYN and the City of Miami Police Department to plant native flowering trees in the rights of way along both sides of SW South River Drive, from the Flagler Street bridge south to Jose Marti Park (SW 4th Street). These trees represented a significant part of the efforts to beautify East Little Havana in preparation for the combined East Little Havana Earth Day / Miami River Day / Bayanza celebration that took place on April 20, 2002, at Jose Marti Park. CFABSF helped organize the event, and paid for all of the trees.



Coral Gables Branch Library, 3443 Segovia St., Coral Gables

This site was designed and installed prior to the FYN program coming to Miami-Dade County. Therefore, it is not an official FYN Demonstration Landscape. However, the grounds around this branch library are organized into a butterfly gardening theme, and represent a shining example of how beautiful a low-maintenance 'Florida Yard' can be.

Miami-Dade Community College Environmental Center, 98th & SW 113th Place, Kendall

On April 27, 2002, the Kendall Campus of Miami-Dade Community College hosted a Family Day, where volunteers from the Kendall area helped install a large FYN Demonstration Landscape just south of the native pineland that makes up the majority of the campus' Environmental Center. A week prior to the planting, a rock plow—donated by H&H Land Clearing of Homestead—crushed the solid coral rock into a workable soil. The volunteers then worked hard to plant several hundred native pineland species in a setting resembling a private yard or landscape. FYN personnel worked with MDCC staff and CFABSF to plan the event, and CFABSF footed the bill for the plants, mulch, refreshments, and entertainment. In addition to being a passive educational site for passersby, this FYN Demonstration Landscape will also be used as a teaching tool by MDCC-EC staff for school groups that tour the MDCC Environmental Center.



Frank C. Martin Elementary School, 14250 Boggs Drive, Richmond Heights

Designed as an outdoor classroom, the majority of plant species utilized in this unique FYN Demonstration Landscape were chosen from a book entitled *The Missing Gator of Gumbo Limbo*—which is required reading for all 4th-graders at Frank C. Martin Elementary. Additional native plants incorporated into the project were chosen for their ability to attract birds and butterflies. All plants used in the landscape were donated—by such groups as the Nature Conservancy, the South Florida Audubon Society, and the Miami-Dade FYN program. In keeping with the outdoor classroom motif, the site also contains benches for the students to sit on while attending classes in this mock hardwood hammock. The plants and benches were installed by students and parents at an event organized by the Frank C. Martin Elementary PTA in April 2002.



South Dade Government Center, 107th & SW 211th Street, Cutler Ridge

In the fall of 2001, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) awarded the Miami-Dade FYN program with a \$25,000 grant to install a “xeriscape” demonstration project at the South Dade Government Center in Cutler Ridge. This FYN Demonstration Landscape was originally planned for the area just north of the South Dade Regional Library, but, for various reasons, it had to be moved to the east side of the South Dade Justice Center building, which is on the turnpike side of the complex. The Scope of Work for the project has been accepted by the SFWMD, and the contract is currently being prepared. The project should be installed during late summer or early fall of 2002.

South Dade Senior High School, 286th & SW 167th Avenue, Homestead

As the two photos at right suggest, South Dade Senior High School (SDSHS) has installed two separate FYN Demonstration Landscapes—the first during the summer of 2001, and the second during the spring of 2002. The first project, a small 14' X 22' FYN Demonstration Garden located just outside the door to the main school office, was organized by FYN personnel and several SDSHS teachers, and was installed primarily by the students of the 2001 summer Agriscience class. The centerpiece of this Garden is the school’s enormous concrete seal, which was “discovered” in a remote corner of the school grounds by one of the teachers and rolled into place by the students.



The second FYN Demonstration Landscape at SDSHS is much larger, and is located in front of the school. Also installed primarily by students, the landscape design was donated by Ken Cook of Plant Creations Nursery—which is located just up the street from the school. This project showcases numerous native plants in raised landscaped beds in a low-maintenance landscape setting that could be modified for any school or institution.



This publication was originally written by Jody Haynes, FYN Program Extension Agent for Miami-Dade County, in June 2002. It will be updated periodically as more FYN Demonstration Landscapes are installed around the county. For more information about the FYN program, visit our website (<http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/programs/fyn.htm>) or call us at 305-248-3311 x245.