



September 2011

---

## MIAMI & GREEN BYTES

---

A Newsletter from the Miami-Dade County Extension Office for local gardeners, arborists, and landscapers.



[July saw a return to normal rainfall but the area is still suffering from a water deficit](#) so water conservation remains as important as ever. The June issue of this newsletter contained information on preparing your landscape to minimize hurricane damage, and while we hope for the best it is now time to review what needs to be done in the aftermath of a storm. This is the subject of the first article which includes links to some highly informative articles from UF tree experts.

### LANDSCAPES AFTER THE STORM: WHAT TO DO FIRST

**First order of business is safety.** Dress appropriately: it will be hot and humid but a hat, work gloves, long legged pants and shirts/blouses with long sleeves will give some protection against sun, insect bites and cuts and abrasions.

- ◆ [Use an insect repellent](#) especially if you must work outdoors early morning or toward dusk (peak times for mosquito activity) – products containing DEET or picaridin are two of the most effective.

- ◆ When clearing away landscape debris not only can spines or prickles pose a danger, but [plants with irritant sap](#) especially where leaves and stems have become shredded.

- ◆ [Be aware of the signs and dangers of heat stress](#) - over exertion and dehydration can be deadly.

- ◆ [Only use a chainsaw if you're familiar with how to use one safely](#) and that includes wearing appropriate headgear, goggles, gloves and chainsaw protective chaps. Leave jobs that require climbing into a damaged tree to a professional certified arborist.

**Assess what can be saved** and prioritize what needs to be done first.

- ◆ Young recently planted trees are most likely to recover even if they have fallen over completely. For success it is crucial to prevent the exposed roots from drying out. They should be moistened



then covered with burlap or an old blanket until the tree can be reset. Once re-set, [irrigate as if a newly-planted field grown tree](#).

- ◆ More mature trees (under 20') that suffered some wind throw but without broken roots should also recover. After returning the tree as far as possible to the upright and bracing or guying the trunk, any roots that remain exposed should be covered with no more than 1" of a gritty soil mix.
- ◆ Toppled trees with trunk diameters of more than 4" and leaning/toppled trees with broken roots of more than 3" diameter (especially if broken close to the trunk) are unlikely to regenerate a root system capable of providing sufficient stability during future storms.
- ◆ Leaning or toppled trees with most of the root system circling the trunk are inherently unstable and should be removed.

◆ **Canopy damage** can range from minor loss of limbs and/or extensive defoliation (common after Wilma) from which most trees will fully recover, to splitting of the trunk and/or loss of large limbs with stripping of large areas of bark as they separate from the tree, where removal is the only option.

◆ A large tree that sustains > 50% canopy loss involving branches > 8" diameter is usually not worth saving. The extensive area of wood exposed after loss of large limbs renders trees more susceptible to infection with wood rot fungi.

◆ Trees that are better able to wall-off decay may recover after loss of up to 75% canopy involving small branches (<4" diameter).

◆ Tree species less able to wall-off infection (e.g., royal Poinciana) should probably be removed where large limbs (>8") have to be severed, especially if close to the trunk.

◆ Consult the following links for more detailed information on [assessing tree damage](#) and [tree restoration](#) after a storm as well as [wind resistance](#) of some of the more familiar trees and palms.

More specific information is also available for [restoring damaged fruit trees](#).

**Tree restoration** – initially limit pruning to removing dangling/split branches and making clean pruning cuts to detach the snapped ends from damaged branches.

*Avoid excess removal of wood as this depletes the tree of food reserves needed to support new growth. Further pruning to better balance the canopy can wait.*

*Trees often sprout vigorously especially just behind pruning cuts. Do not remove as all of these new leaves are required to transform the sun's energy into a form that the tree can utilize to fuel the replacement of lost canopy. Excess growth can be removed in the future.*

*Take the opportunity to remove damaged trees on [Miami-Dade's prohibited tree list](#) such as *Bischofia* and *Albizia*.*



## Water Conservation

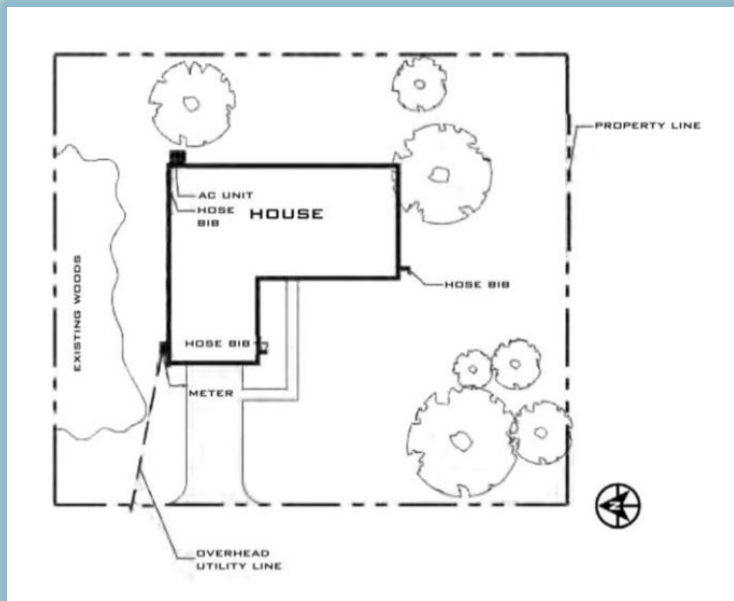
It may seem odd to mention water conservation with rainfall so plentiful, but as was stated in the introduction to this issue of Miami Green Bytes, all of SE Florida is still suffering from a water deficit. Rain barrels offer homeowners, community and school gardens, roof top gardens, small businesses and others a relatively easy means of storing water. For container plants that are

sensitive to fluoride or the high pH of local tap and well water, rain water is the answer. Now is the time to install a rain barrel, while we are in the rainy season (September is usually our second rainiest month). If you already have a rain barrel, then why not install an additional one? [Find out](#)

[more about rain barrels](#) including installation plus details of upcoming workshops.

## Converting your yard to a Florida-Friendly Landscape

**Thinking of updating or re-designing your landscape?** No need to feel overwhelmed if you follow Florida Yards & Neighborhood's nine bedrock principles for taking on such a task. A critical first step is conducting a site analysis; this will help you determine both the opportunities and constraints of your yard. In designing your landscape bear in mind each site is

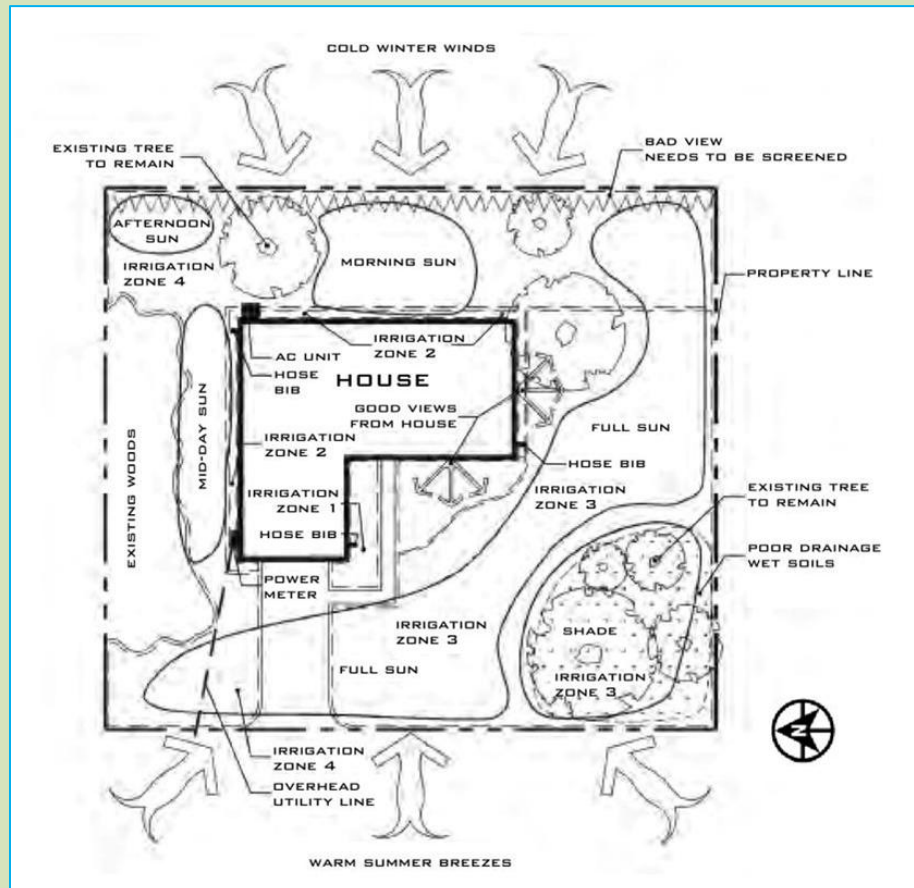


unique. Being cognizant of its' unique features will enable you to make informed design decisions and avoid poor plant selection and/or placement, the source of most landscape issues.

**How to conduct a site analysis?** If no survey map of your property is readily available create a base map of your property as shown above. Add in hard structures such as overhead and underground utility lines, A/C Unit and hedges/fences. Call 811 to have underground utilities marked. In order to develop a plan for the new landscape walk through your property and note existing features you wish to remove, those you wish to keep, and planned improvements. These can then be indicated on the base map as illustrated at right.

**Features to take into account include:**

- ◆ Existing plants to be retained
- ◆ Changes in sun exposure/shade through the day



- ◆ *Wind exposure*
- ◆ *Views – decide which to keep or those you would prefer hidden*
- ◆ *Changes in grade – the landscape sites slopes and inclines*
- ◆ *Vehicle access*
- ◆ *Ease of maintenance*
- ◆ *Don't forget your personal/family needs – an area suitable for entertaining guests and/or a play area for children*

More detailed information on designing your Florida-friendly landscape is available in [“The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design”](#). Intended for homeowners who want to take the next steps in designing their own Florida-Friendly Landscapes, it includes landscape designs, a planning worksheet and many UF/IFAS recommendations. After completing your site map for a Florida-friendly landscape select appropriate plants for each section by consulting the UF Extension publications [“Low-maintenance Landscape Plants for South Florida”](#) or [‘Native Landscape Plants for South Florida’](#). The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program also offers a free seminar “Redesigning Your Landscape: A guide to transforming your yard into a Florida-Friendly Landscape”. Check our website calendar for upcoming workshops: <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml>

**Pest Up-dates Timely information regarding pests affecting Miami-Dade gardens and landscapes**

- ◆ The USDA has proclaimed August as ‘Invasive pest and disease month’, and this has particular local relevance given the pace at which new pest challenges have arisen over the past few years. [Review the USDA-APHIS fact sheet](#) on the economic impact of introduced plant pests and disease and how we can all help to minimize new introductions.
- ◆ Staying with the theme of invasive pests, [DPI issued an alert for a root weevil from Jamaica](#), which has now been found in the Bahamas. Related to the familiar *Diaprepes*, it has not as yet been found in Florida, but is of concern as a pest of citrus and has also been noted feeding on mango and several ornamental shrubs including cocoplum and seagrape.
- ◆ The rugose spiraling whitefly continues to make its’ presence felt in Miami-Dade. Make sure you accurately identify a problem as due to whitefly. Samples taken from a live oak in Coral Gables, covered in white flossy material, and then brought to the Extension Office were found to be infested with woolly aphids, not whiteflies. Woolly aphids pose more of a problem elsewhere (e.g., for apple orchards); the species found on local live oak is of negligible concern.
- ◆ Primarily of use to those with a pesticide license, EPA has a new easy to use web site that enables searches of [thousands of EPA approved pesticide labels](#) using both the manufacturer and product name.
- ◆ So far this summer many parts of Miami-Dade have been plagued with large numbers of mosquitoes making outdoor work a challenge. It is important to remove objects that can collect water from around residences, businesses and schools etc. as these can provide breeding sites for

'[container mosquitoes](#)' . One of these *Aedes aegypti* is the mosquito that transmits [dengue fever](#) and dog heartworm and is present year round. For bromeliads flush tanks to remove plant detritus or use products containing the larvacide methoprene ([low environmental risk according to EPA](#) ).

### **Plant of the Month**

### ***Bauhinia galpinii***

### **Pride of the Cape**

**Featuring low input plants for Miami-Dade landscapes**

Due for a revival **pride of the Cape *Bauhinia galpinii***, was quite popular in local landscapes 30-40 years ago but has since fallen out of favor. Native to southern Africa, it grows as a large scandent shrub admired for the late spring/summer show of brilliant orange to brick red, orchid-like flowers. Pride-of-the-Cape needs full sun for best flowering and should be planted in a free draining somewhat sandy soil. It can be allowed to grow as a sprawling shrub or for best affect tied in to a pergola, arbor or sturdy chain link fence. Although a scandent climber, friction

between a stem and its support can induce *B. galpinii* to weakly twine. Allow plenty of room as it can grow to 15 – 20' and resents hard pruning. Like most other bauhinias in cultivation, pride-of-the-Cape has bi-lobed "cloven hoof" leaves, a limited number of which may drop in winter, more so during an extended period of cool weather.

Bauhinias are susceptible to potassium deficiency (see below, leaf margins become yellow and necrotic) and iron/ manganese deficiency (inter-veinal chlorosis, more so on high pH soils).

Apply a complete slow release fertilizer high in potassium (the 8/2/12 palm special is ideal) in early spring and again late summer. Apart from its outstanding ornamental attributes, pride of the Cape also



exhibits excellent drought tolerance once established and, unlike some other bauhinias, is unlikely to become invasive. In cultivation any pods that do form contain mostly sterile seeds. Propagation is from seeds (where available) or by air layers. Two other cultivated climbing 'bauhinias' *B. corymbosa* phanera and *B. yunnanensis* Saigon creeper, which attach by means of tendrils, produce viable seed, the latter having reportedly naturalized in Miami-Dade. Both species were recently re-assigned to the genus *Phanera*.

**At this time of year  
..... a fall to-do list for  
Miami-Dade landscapes**

- ◆ Vegetable gardens should be ready by October for setting out transplants – if you are new to vegetable gardening choose items that are [relatively easy-to-grow](#) and select [varieties recommended for Florida](#)

- ◆ Crops such as beans, beets, corn, radishes, spinach are usually grown from seed sown directly into the soil. Some vegetables require cool temperatures and are best left until late fall (mid-November) until they're set out in the garden – beets, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower (difficult), kale, lettuce, English peas (not reliable), potatoes (Irish), and radishes.

- ◆ [Strawberry](#) transplants will be appearing in area garden shops for planting out during early fall (transplants are not raised locally but, shipped in from Canada and some northern states). Strawberries are well suited to raised-bed gardening using drip irrigation or a soaker hose. Limited space? – then consider constructing [a strawberry barrel](#).

- ◆ Mango season ends in September; any pruning should have been attended to immediately after harvest, followed by an application of a high potassium fertilizer. New recommendations will call for using far less fertilizer nitrogen; this could help reduce the incidence of [internal breakdown](#), a physiological disorder most familiar as jelly seed or soft nose. Other symptoms are also seen such as the areas of bright yellow spongy flesh shown right.



- ◆ September is also the tail end of longan season, though some cultivars such as Diamond River produce an off season crop from September into October. Other fruit trees producing fruit: guava (into October), carambola (through September then a late crop beginning in December), atemoya (into October) and kumquat (beginning in November).

- ◆ As fall approaches it's time to consider planting colorful annual bedding plants; find out [what is involved](#) and [what water-wise choices are available for Miami-Dade](#).

- ◆ With the cooler weather of late fall [turf grass will require less water](#); if you apply a late season fertilizer use one high in potash (the slow release 8-2-12 slow release palm special is suitable). Wait until day time temperatures are below 85°F before using an herbicide in order to avoid potential damage to lawn grass.

- ◆ As the rainy season ends check the yard for unwanted plants that have volunteered in response to summer's heat and rainfall. It's not just well known pest plants such as Brazilian pepper but landscape items including barlerias, ruellias, Surinam cherry, orange jasmine and fruit trees such as loquats that can readily volunteer. Vines especially should be removed promptly – some such as [princess vine](#) and [cat's claw vine](#) can form aerial roots and once established in a tree become extremely difficult to eradicate.

If you're wondering how else Miami-Dade Extension helps county residents call or use the internet links to our office shown below – there's assistance with food preparation,

nutrition, health and managing family finances, plus an active 4H youth development program. Boaters, anglers and those who care for our marine environment will find information and activities within the local Sea Grant program. Send any general comments concerning Miami Green Bytes to the editor and for a specific article contact the author using the e-mail links provided below.

**'Look for the next issue of Miami Green Bytes during December 2011**



---

The Miami-Dade County Extension Office, a division of Miami-Dade County Consumer Services Department, is located at 18710 SW 288 Street, Homestead, FL 33030, and can be contacted at 305 248-3311 or by e-mail: [dade@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:dade@ifas.ufl.edu) . Web site: <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/>

The articles in this issue are by: [John McLaughlin Ph.D.](#) and [Henry Mayer M.S.](#) (landscape storm restoration), [Laura Vasquez](#) (Florida friendly landscaping) and John McLaughlin Ph.D. (remainder).

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity – Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, IFAS, FLORIDA A. & M. UNIVERSITY

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING

For sign language interpreters or materials in accessible format or other ADA Accommodations please call

Donna Lowe at (305)248-3311 x 240 at least five days in advance.