

FALL 2003

ECO-Update is the quarterly newsletter of Sustainable Sarasota.

**Table of Contents**

- 1-Green Building Wins Sustainability Award
- 1-Biological Control For Fire Ants
- 2-ECO-Tips: Green Design For Your Home
- 3-Did You Know? Facts on Pesticides
- 4-Meet the Staff of Sustainable Sarasota
- 5-Calendar of Events
- 5-From the Environmental Library: Sustainable Architecture
- 6-Community Partner Meeting Calendar

Join our electronic mailing list!

Send an e-mail with the word "JOIN" in subject line to: [SustainableSarasota@scgov.net](mailto:SustainableSarasota@scgov.net)



## Sarasota County "Green Building" Wins Sustainable Architecture Award

The new Sarasota County office complex at Twin Lakes Park was announced the winner of the **2003 Sustainable Florida Architecture Merit Award** on July 15. This award-winning building was designed according to sustainability principles of architecture and construction, showcasing a number of innovative, resource-efficient technologies.



The Twin Lakes office complex was designed according to sustainability principles to minimize environmental impact.

The complex will be partially powered by a solar voltaic system that generates and stores electricity. A 28,000 gallon cistern is located underground to harvest rainwater for toilet flushing and irrigation. Indoor temperature will be regulated by a geothermal cooling system that uses water from underground wells to cool the building.

(Continued on page 2)

## Parasitic Flies Tested as Natural Alternative For Fire Ant Control

If you're a seasoned Floridian (and if you're not, please take note), you are surely familiar with *Solenopsis invicta*—more commonly known as the fire ant. If you're a seasoned environmentalist, you may not wish any unnecessary harm upon many of our fellow insect creatures, but you have likely learned that the fire ant species, on the other hand, does not hesitate to wage war against you or any other brave souls who venture into its habitat—which covers much of the U.S. and is growing.

With its painful and poisonous sting, the fire ant is a ruthless enemy, one which has plagued Floridians since the 1930s. Even today, its population continues to spread throughout the state and the country. Luckily, the USDA has found one "natural enemy" of this invasive pest—the phorid fly from



A decapitated fire ant lies dead, the victim of phorid fly larvae.

(Continued on page 3)



# “Green Design” Made Simple

## Create Eco-Friendly Features In Your Own Home!

Many of the sustainable strategies used by green builders can also be implemented at home. Check out these helpful tips to create your own “green” house!

**1. Create a tight building envelope.** One of the first steps towards an energy-efficient home is proper insulation. If you’re building or remodeling, install insulation with the highest “**R-Value**” possible. For maximum benefit, concentrate on southern-facing walls, attics, and ceilings. By adding just 10 inches of ceiling insulation, you can **reduce air-conditioning costs by 30%!**

**2. Use fluorescent light bulbs.** Fluorescent bulbs use **one-quarter the energy** of regular bulbs and can **last up to seven years!** Fluorescents even reduce your air-conditioning needs. These bulbs fit all typical lamps and fixtures, are available at local department stores, and are an energy-efficient bargain at prices as low as \$5 a piece.

**3. Plant native trees for beauty, health, and efficiency.** Create an eco-friendly yard with native plants, trees, and shrubs that beautify and attract wildlife. Trees contribute fresh oxygen to our air, help to combat global warming, and can **cool our homes by up to 10° Fahrenheit!** Plant tall shrubs and trees along the south side of the home to maximize this “passive cooling” effect. Be sure to use drought-tolerant species to minimize irrigation needs.



**4. Conduct an Energy Audit.** Talk to the experts at Florida Power & Light to get a **Free Energy Audit** of your home. You can even enroll in **FPL Rebates Program** to earn money while saving energy!

To learn more, Go to: [www.fpl.com/home/services/contents/home\\_services\\_and\\_rebates.shtml](http://www.fpl.com/home/services/contents/home_services_and_rebates.shtml)

Or call: 1-800-DIAL-FPL

**5. Build a Rain Barrel.** Help reduce stormwater runoff pollution and cut down on your water bills with your very own **Rain Barrel**. With a large plastic drum and some simple tools, you can create a homemade cistern to harvest rainwater for irrigation, car-washing, and other outdoor needs.



For complete instructions, Go to: <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/Hort/Pubs/Rainbarrel.htm>

Or contact: Sarasota Coop. Extension 941-861-9800

**Solutions Corner**

**ECO-Tips** are a series of sustainable living tips brought to you by Sustainable Sarasota.

For more information or to order the entire series of **ECO-Tips** (free of charge), contact:  
Jessica Noon  
jnoon@scgov.net  
941-861-5653

### County Green Building Wins Award *from p. 1* —

These features add up to a “High Performance” building that provides a healthy, productive workplace for county staff, while minimizing environmental impact and conserving money through reduced energy and water usage.

Sarasota’s new North County Library will also be built according to U.S. Green Building standards. These projects are a part of Sarasota County’s long-range commitment to High Performance Building. “The county is striving to be a model in the community for sustainable facilities and we hope this is an example for others to follow,” notes County Commissioners Chair Shannon Staub.

The Sustainable Florida Architecture Merit Award

is granted through the Council for Sustainable Florida and the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects. Twin Lakes is one of only two buildings in the state to be recognized with a sustainable architecture award.

Michael Carlson of Carlson, Cardinal + Partners, Inc. is the primary architect for the Twin Lakes structure and received the award on behalf of Sarasota County on July 17. Governor Bush and his cabinet hosted a ceremony at the Capitol in Tallahassee on September 30 to recognize all award winners.

For more information on Sarasota County’s commitment to High-Performance Building, contact Jodi John at [jjohn@scgov.net](mailto:jjohn@scgov.net) or 941-861-5656.

**Sustainable Sarasota · Sarasota County · [SustainableSarasota@scgov.net](mailto:SustainableSarasota@scgov.net) · 941-861-5653**



## Phorid Fly Release *from p. 1* —

South America, whose larvae gruesomely decapitates the fire ant, killing it dead.

This Spring, Sarasota County Cooperative Extension earned the opportunity to release phorid flies in our area as part of a cutting-edge program to assist in our struggle against the fire ant. The hope is that these flies will reproduce and create a “biological control” to naturally suppress the fire ant population.

**Biological control** is the concept of using parasites and predators to reduce or control a pest population. Scientists study ecological patterns to create biological forms of pest control to help prevent the

application of chemicals pesticides. The idea is to work *with* nature rather than against her.

Biological control appears to be an ideal solution for Florida’s fire ant population, which in the past has been treated mainly with chemical insecticides. However, these products have done little more than “challenge” the fire ant population, which has not been reduced or stabilized, but rather continues to grow.

Furthermore, these chemical pesticides pose environmental and health threats even more dangerous than the fire ant sting. Many pesticides can poison humans and wildlife upon contact, and nearly all contain neurotoxins, reproductive toxins, and other compounds that cause cancer through repeated exposure. After we apply these chemicals in our homes and yards, they leach into the groundwater and run off into local waterways, disturbing natural habitat and endangering human health.

Farmers, landscapers, and other professionals typically resort to treating for fire ants three or four times each year, as these ants not only terrorize humans, but are also known to debilitate and

devour crops! This constant application of chemical pesticides costs government and agriculture nearly \$7 billion dollars annually, not to mention the cost of endangerment to human and environmental health.

The phorid fly (*Pseudacteon tricuspis*) emerges as a promising solution to this six-legged threat to our environment, economy, and public health. Phorid flies actually lay their eggs in the body of the fire ant. When fly larvae emerge, they proceed to consume the fire ant while it is *still alive*, beginning with the decapitated head and proceeding to the entire ant body. By using this “natural enemy” against the fire ant species, scientists can bring the population under control and curb the pesticide cycle.

The first phorid fly release in Sarasota County took place in November of last year, under the supervision of Dr. Fred Santana, Integrated Pest Management Coordinator. Sarasota is the first and only county in the state of Florida to participate in this innovative program, lead by the USDA. Sarasota County Cooperative Extension is a strong supporter of the “natural” approach to pest control. Our Integrated Pest Management [IPM] program promotes **low-toxic** pest control methods that are safer for our environment and our families.

For more information on Sarasota County’s Integrated Pest Management Program, contact: Dr. Fred Santana, IPM Coordinator, at [fsantana@scgov.net](mailto:fsantana@scgov.net) or 941-861-1172



The parasitic phorid fly lays its eggs in the body of the

F Santana

## Did you know...

- 4.1 billion pounds of pesticides are used throughout the world each year
- 30 times more pesticides are used today than in 1945
- 30% of insecticides are believed to be carcinogenic
- 60% of herbicides are believed to be carcinogenic
- 90% of fungicides are believed to be carcinogenic
- 3/4 of U.S. households are using pesticides, while just over half of U.S. farms are using them
- 74 different pesticides have been detected in our drinking water

*There are a number of safe and natural products that we can use as alternatives to toxic pesticides.*

*Please contact Sustainable Sarasota for more information on low-toxic methods of pest control.*



Dr. Fred Santana prepares phorid flies for release as part of Sarasota County’s Integrated Pest Management program.



# Meet the Staff

## Of Sustainable Sarasota

In the past few months, our group has grown by leaps and bounds. To help you get acquainted with Sustainable Sarasota and the resources we provide, here's a brief introduction to our hard-working "Sustainability Crew."

**Pictured At Right:** Back Row-Mary Robbins, Jodi John, Michele Guffanti, Alec Foster. Middle Row-Katherine "Pete" Summers, Jessica Noon, Sarah Kell. Front Row-Zach Shahan



**Jodi John** is the Manager of Sustainability for Sarasota County. Jodi has worked in Waste Management and Recycling since 1976 and has spent over 20 years working with Sarasota County. Jodi spearheaded the "Sustainability Resolution" which was passed by the Board of County Commissioners in May, 2002, initiating the Sustainable Sarasota program. Jodi is the coordinator for Sustainable Sarasota, focusing on projects such as High-Performance Building, Energy-Smart Schools, and Sustainable Seafood. **Contact:** 861-5656 [jjohn@scgov.net](mailto:jjohn@scgov.net)

**Alec Foster** is one of our newest staff members, joining us in June 2003. Alec has a degree in Environmental Studies / Economics from New College, where he completed an undergraduate thesis on sustainable forestry. Alec heads up the Economic Development initiative, providing research and consulting on sustainable business policies. Alec is also working on High-Performance Building, Alternative Fuels/Green Fleet, and Environmentally-Preferred Electronics. **Contact:** 861-5658 [afoster@scgov.net](mailto:afoster@scgov.net)

**Michele Guffanti** is a full-time volunteer, with us since October 2002. Michele conducts research on a wide range of sustainability topics. Currently, she is working on a compilation of Sustainability Curricula and a searchable database of sustainable products, services, and businesses. Michele is a Master Conservationist with 6 years of volunteer experience at Florida House and 11 years with the Gulf Gate Library. **Contact:** 861-5654 [mguffanti@scgov.net](mailto:mguffanti@scgov.net)

**Sarah Kell** is a student intern who is researching Environmental Health issues. Sarah has a strong background in social justice issues and is currently working on her undergraduate thesis on a grassroots social and environmental movement in India at New College. **Contact:** 861-5652 [skell@scgov.net](mailto:skell@scgov.net)

**Jessica Noon** has been working with us since October 2002 on Alternative Fuels/Green Fleet, Environmentally-Preferred Electronics, and more recently Education/Outreach. Jessica is the editor of the ECO-Update newsletter and is working to publish a series of ECO-Tips on sustainable living. Jessica graduated from New College in 2002 in Environmental Sciences / Anthropology. **Contact:** 861-5653 [jnoon@scgov.net](mailto:jnoon@scgov.net)

**Mary Robbins** has been working with us for 9 months, focusing on Environmentally-Procurement [EPP]. Mary is developing a county-wide EPP policy and purchasing manual for county buyers, and managing pilot programs in least-toxic janitorial supplies and recycled paper and office supplies. Mary is an '02 graduate of the University of Florida with a B.A. in Political Science, a certificate in International Relations, and a minor in Environmental Studies. **Contact:** 861-5652 [mrobbins@scgov.net](mailto:mrobbins@scgov.net)

**Katherine "Pete" Summers** is another new staff member who joined us in June. Pete is an '03 graduate from New College with a B.A. in Political Science and International Studies. Pete completed an undergraduate thesis on the UN Sustainability Indicators, based on fieldwork in the Peruvian Amazon. Pete is heading up the Eco-Footprint initiative and working on Sustainable Seafood and Eco-Tourism. **Contact:** 861-5657 [ksummers@scgov.net](mailto:ksummers@scgov.net)

**Zach Shahan** is a student intern from New College of Florida with a concentration in Sociology / Environmental Studies. Zach is coordinating a Sustainability Education initiative with Booker High School Environmental Science Academy. Zach is also developing a local business directory and currency. Zach is currently working on an undergrad thesis in neighborhood planning and campus living with plans to graduate in 2004. **Contact:** 861-5652 [zshahan@scgov.net](mailto:zshahan@scgov.net)



# Calendar of Events

October 2-31 **Ongoing Display:** "Red Tide." Environmental Collection, Selby Library, Sarasota.

October 18 **Habitat For Humanity Home Improvement Outlet Grand Opening** The Home Improvement Outlet provides new and used materials for the home and yard, the proceeds of which benefit Habitat For Humanity. Tax-deductible donations of used and salvaged materials will be accepted. 10:30AM-4PM (Regular hours Tues.-Sat. 10-4). 1757 East Avenue, Sarasota. For more info: 941-923-4300.

October 22-23 **E-Scrap 2003 Conference** Learn about state, local and national initiatives in electronics recycling and product stewardship. Presenters include environmental executives from Dell and HP. (Orlando, FL) For more info, contact: e-scrapnews.com or 503-233-1305

October 25 **Successful Restoration Techniques 101** Restoration workshops, seminars, and family fun hosted by Sarasota Alliance for Historical Preservation and Sarasota Architectural Salvage. 10AM-3PM, 1143 Central Avenue, Sarasota.

October 25th University of Florida **150th Anniversary Celebration** Sarasota County Cooperative Extension will celebrate the past, present, and future of the extension service with displays on Horticulture, Family Services, and Sustainability! 10AM-3PM, Florida House, 4600 South Beneva Road, Sarasota.

November 15 **Nature Photography Course** with Elaine Dunkelberger. Cost: \$30 8:30-11:00AM, Crowley Museum and Nature Center. To reserve a space call: 941-322-1000

*Please contact us to promote your sustainability-related course, event, or meeting in our calendar!*

## Check It Out At The Environmental Library!

Housed on the 2nd Floor of Selby Public Library



### This Month's Feature: Sustainable Architecture

#### Green Architecture

James Wines (2000)

This colorfully-illustrated book explores the diverse and fragmented history of ecological architecture, showcasing environmentally-aware architects who have made major contributions to the green building field we know it today. Wines develops a discussion of exactly what it means to create "green" architecture, and how this concept can help to create a more sustainable society. Included are numerous photographs of innovative examples of green building.

#### Housing Ourselves : Creating Affordable, Sustainable Shelter

Richard Burnham (1998)

*Housing Ourselves* makes a strong argument that sustainable building and affordable housing go hand in hand. With careful planning and resourcefulness, environmental design can be low-impact, low-cost, durable, and practical. This book encourages homeowners to design and construct their own homes to incorporate ecological concepts with simple applications. Sample plans for economic and ecological home designs are included.

#### Evolutionary Architecture : Nature as a Basis for Design

Eugene Tsui (1999)

This eloquent book divulges Tsui's unique architectural philosophy on the integration of natural forms into aesthetic, resource-efficient building. Tsui illustrates how ecology provides the rules for sustainable architecture, providing a practical and spiritual basis for green design.

#### Building Inside Nature's Envelope How New Construction and Land Preservation Can Work Together

Andy and Sally Wasoski (2000)

Native plant enthusiasts and botanists, the Wasoskis write about the actual physical interface between architecture and the natural environment. This practical book shows how a truly green building can maintain minimal impact on and disturbance of surrounding vegetation and wildlife.

*Each ECO-Update edition will feature books on sustainability from the Sarasota County Environmental Library. For more information, contact Vera Neumann-Wood at: vneumann@scgov.net*

**ECO-Update** is the quarterly newsletter of Sustainable Sarasota, showcasing sustainability programs, news, and events in Sarasota County and across the globe.

Editor: Jessica Noon

Graphic Assistance: Thom Williams

Reviewed by: Jodi John, Elizabeth Canterine

*If you would like to have your sustainability program, event, or organization featured in ECO-Update, please contact Jessica Noon at 861-5653 or jnoon@scgov.net*



**Cultivating Sustainability  
in Sarasota County**

**Mission:** To promote sustainability within Sarasota County Government and throughout the community.

**Sustainability** means balancing environment, economics, and social equity to satisfy our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**Services:** Sustainable Sarasota is a resource center providing research, consulting, partnerships, education, and outreach on various aspects of sustainability.

**Current projects include:**

- Green Building
- Energy-Efficiency
- Water Conservation
- Environmentally-Preferred Purchasing
- Alternative Fuels
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Eco-Footprint Analysis
- Sustainable Seafood

**Contact Us** to learn more about these and other sustainability programs!

## ***Sustainable Sarasota Community Partnership Meetings***

**Who:** Concerned Citizens, Business Leaders, Government Officials, Students, Teachers, and Others — **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**What:** Updates on Sustainable Sarasota and other local programs. Featured speakers and presentations on a variety of topics.

**When:** First Monday of Every Month at 1:30 PM

**Where:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Sarasota County Admin. Building  
1660 Ringling Boulevard, Sarasota (Unless Otherwise Noted)

## **Upcoming Presentations**

**November 3** Jesse White, Sarasota Architectural Salvage

**Location:** 1143 Central Ave, Sarasota

“Deconstruction : How It Benefits Us All”

*Includes tour of Sarasota Architectural Salvage*

**December 1** Belinda Perry, Manager SCG Natural Resources, ESLPP

“Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisition Program:

Past, Present, and Future”

**January 5** Michael Holsinger, Manager SCG Cooperative Extension

“Vision For a Sustainable Community”

**February 2** Dr. Fred Santana and Nina Powers, SCG Cooperative Extension and Public Works

“Integrated Pest Management”

### ***Get Involved!***

**Partners:** Local businesses, government agencies, community groups, and schools are invited to join our ***Sustainability Network!*** Benefits include opportunities for local recognition, promotion, and networking.

**Volunteers & Interns:** Learn about sustainability and participate in local projects! Students may be eligible for college credit.

### ***Contact Us***

**Sustainable Sarasota**  
Sarasota County  
Admin. Building, 3rd Floor  
1660 Ringling Boulevard  
Sarasota, FL 34236  
941-861-5653

SustainableSarasota@scgov.net  
*Send an e-mail with the word “JOIN” in the subject line to subscribe to our electronic mailing list!*

