

NATIVE PLANTS BRINGING THEM INTO THE MAINSTREAM

WHY? Because it just makes sense! Native plants should be used because they have adapted to Florida's natural soils and weather conditions. Native trees have even evolved to withstand frequent hurricanes, tropical storms and wildfires, which Florida is known for.

Aquifers and natural resources are being used faster than they can be replenished. The use of native plants encourages water conservation, since 30-70% of urban water use goes to irrigating landscapes. Using native plants also encourages Xeriscape principles and low maintenance by using less pesticides and requiring less pruning when allowed to grow in their natural form. Native plants reflect the traditional, Old Florida feel and create a sense of place, a sense of permanence and always having been there. From an aesthetic standpoint, the use of native plants clearly states where we are. You know you are in Florida when you see massive Live Oaks and stately Cabbage Palms.

It is important that we all encourage and practice the use of native plants in our landscapes to preserve, protect and enhance what natural communities we have left. Most city and county governments now require

that a specific percentage of native plants be used for land development code compliance. We, at Hole Montes, work closely with such agencies, often getting variances approved, to "think outside the box" and deliver the ultimate product.

If used in similar conditions to their natural habitats, native plants can be relatively care free. A familiar misconception is that natives do not need water. Once established, correctly located plants do well without irrigation but they, like almost all plants, do need water to get established. If possible, planting of natives should be coordinated with the rainy season and supplemental irrigation may not be necessary. The ultimate in sustainability, native plants sustain themselves and thrive on available rainfall. If they didn't, they wouldn't still be here.

Using a diversified, native plant palette replicates nature and provides havens for birds and predators that will feed on pests without the need for spraying. Reducing chemical pollutants in runoff protects stormwater quality and reducing pesticide sprays is essential to the health, safety and welfare of the public.

In practicing energy conserva-



tion, properly selected and located native plants can reduce water consumption, minimize effort that would be spent on frequent pruning and provide shade and protection from sun and wind, reducing labor and utility costs.

Using native plants allows us to support the "balance of nature" and nourish and celebrate the beauty of our landscape as Mother Nature intended. By planting native, we can maintain a real Florida look in our landscapes and put back and preserve some of what is rapidly disappearing.

Commissioned to work on the new Chico's World Headquarters, Hole Montes, Inc. will demonstrate how the existing natural conditions can be preserved and integrated with a domesticated landscape based on a native theme.



For more information contact Hole Montes on the web at www.holemontes.com or call at these locations:



Fort Myers
(239) 985-1200



Naples
(239) 254-2000

Venice
(941) 412-3712

