

## BOOK REVIEW

### NATIVE PLANTS IN THE DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE

by Dick Workman

**Natural Landscaping: Designing with Native Plant Communities**, John Diekelmann and Robert Schuster. 1982. McGraw-Hill, N.Y. 276 pp. (\$24.95)

Many native plant enthusiasts in Florida have learned from experience that substituting native plants in conventional landscape patterns falls short of recreating the quality and benefits of a natural environment. Those who have succeeded in capturing natural benefits with a native domestic landscape have planted appropriate native species in natural-like associations.

It seems a simple enough concept to understand, but the complexities appear to increase logarithmically when one actually tries to do it.

A number of books have been written in recent years that encourage this reintroduction of native plants into the domestic landscape, even though the loss of natural plant communities have hardly become a major issue for the American public. But this new book, **Natural Landscaping**, is an advanced, comprehensive treatment of natural system modeling techniques for recreating natural plant communities in the domestic landscape. The authors take some of the complexity out of the problem with a thorough analysis and a skillful presentation of the state of the art.

Part one of the book introduces the reader to what the authors term "naturalizing," and discusses important plant community concepts. The authors make it clear that most landscape hobbyists and professionals must be reprogrammed to think more in terms of plant physiology rather than ornament for plant selection

priority.

The second part of the book describes plant communities of the northeastern and mid-western states. These chapters however, should not be dismissed as irrelevant to the Florida reader. The approach used to describe each community helps the reader tune in to the features which are important for recreating the environment.

Planning and design are discussed in the third section of the book. This very well-illustrated and detailed section guides the reader through site analysis and techniques for insuring that the proper plants and plant communities are appropriate not only for the physical setting but for the use of the site as well. Examples from a variety of environments that provide information on how the process has worked in specific situations make up the last section. Appendices follow with species lists for northeastern communities and a listing of places where examples of natural plant communities can be seen.

If you are one of the pioneers experiencing the frustrations of trying to recreate complex natural plant communities in the landscape, don't expect this book to unlock all the secrets to short circuiting natural succession. The authors make it clear that recreating a plant community that has taken generations to develop in nature will take generations in the domestic landscape as well.

**Natural Landscaping** is an important and timely reference. Though written for a distinctly different geographical area, Florida native landscape advocates will find it to be both enjoyable to read and indispensable as a technical reference.

"All Florida gardens should be bird sanctuaries. Birds are not only beautiful, but are our most efficient allies in destroying injurious insects. Without the birds, our gardens, forests, and fields would be lifeless deserts and, unhappily, our birds are decreasing in an alarming way. Their enemies are numerous, the worst of all being man. Cats and squirrels are dangerous enemies to most birds, and also the climbing snakes, particularly the black snake and the so-called "coach-whip." Birds feed almost exclusively on insects, but they need variety, and enjoy a little fruit as well. They deserve all they take, as a compensation for their work as insect destroyers.

"Birds always prefer the fruits and berries of wild trees and shrubs to the cultivated ones. Our common Elderberry, the various Hollies, Wild Cherries, and others should be planted on every estate."

• Dr. Henry Nehrling

## THANKS!

Thanks to the following people for their assistance and support in the production of the first edition of the FNPS traveling exhibition board: new corporate members Foster, Conant and Associates, Landscape Architects of Orlando; Florida Screen Service of Altamonte; Linda Duever, Steve Brill, Marion Skilling, Mitch Philippe, Triangle Reprographics, Bill Partington, Peggy Lantz. It was on display at the May FNPS Conference, has been shown in Miami, and was set up in the Winter Park Mall over the weekend of July 24th and 25th.

I encourage your analysis and input for later editions.

• David Drylie  
Green Images, Orlando