

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Release: Immediate**

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## **FLORIDA-FRIENDLY DEMONSTRATION GARDENS CROPPING UP EVERYWHERE**

Lakeland, Florida – (April 7, 2009) – The Polk County Builders Association (PCBA) is out to prove that “Polk IS Florida-Friendly”. The PCBA and several partners in Polk County have selected more than 15 sites to bring Florida-Friendly demonstration gardens to a location near you. Funded with a grant from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD), the Alafia, Hillsborough and Peace River Basin Boards and the Board of County Commissioners, this program promotes greater public awareness of our fragile water resources and gives interested citizens a venue to participate in viable environmental solutions.

Demonstration gardens will be available in Lake Alfred, Frostproof, Babson Park, Davenport, Winter Haven, Haines City, Lake Wales, Bartow and Lakeland. The goal of this program is to promote the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program's nine Florida-friendly landscaping principles through education outreach to homeowners, builders, developers, students and government officials throughout the county. Florida-friendly landscaping principles are designed to protect and conserve water – our most precious natural resource.

Additionally, the PCBA will work closely with Polk County Natural Resources and Utility Departments, the cities of Lakeland, Winter Haven, Haines City, Polk County Florida Yards & Neighborhoods and the Friends of the Parks on a range of educational presentations and the development and distribution of educational materials. The BoCC has recently approved a landscape ordinance to promote water conservation landscapes in new development throughout the county, and this program supports the objectives of that ordinance.

The grant will help pay for the production of a printed map and tour guide to the demonstration landscape sites throughout Polk County and an illustrated list of those plants most suited to the special soil and climate conditions here in Polk County. There will also be a companion electronic presentation and DVD for use in workshops and at community events throughout the year. All materials produced under this grant will be distributed free of charge. Municipalities and other interested groups will be provided with the electronic version to use on their websites.

\*MORE\*

**Citizens who want to attend workshops, help distribute information, or participate in the creation of Florida-friendly gardens are urged to call Beth Bodenstern at the PCBA, 863-665-0844, or email her at [bethb@pcba.com](mailto:bethb@pcba.com).**

“Polk IS Florida-Friendly can be found on Facebook at <http://companies.to/polkisflorida-friendly/>

Chartered by the National Association of Homebuilders in 1952, the Polk County Builders Association is a construction industry organization comprised of builder and associate members. PCBA promotes quality and affordable housing for the citizens of Polk County while creating a favorable and prosperous business climate for its members.

#### **Sidebar**

##### **List of gardens sites**

City of Lakeland

City Hall

Main Library/Lake Morton

Unincorporated Polk County

SPCA building

City of Bartow

Extension Office FYN garden

CFRPC Office

City of Winter Haven

Polk County Utilities building

Lake Alfred

Polk Training Center FYN garden

McKay Gardens

City of Haines City

Public Works/Utilities building

Davenport

Outpost 27

Babson Park

Post Office rain garden

Babson Park Heights community entranceway

Babson Park Community Church

City of Frostproof

Wall Street Park, 2 blocks off Scenic Highway

Frostproof Historical Museum on Scenic Highway

Lake Wales

New DOH building