



Grounds & Landscape Committee Spring Update

- The committee met on February 2nd to do an on-site walking tour of the existing plants on Islands Avenue to generate ideas/priorities. Using a copy of the original plans from a professional landscape architect the board hired several years ago, we mapped out a less dense plan using many of the same plantings that were planted earlier along Islands Avenue.

Greenery Special Projects

- Replanted the Cotton Island pump station with better performing Sweet Viburnum.
- Cleared Wax Myrtle along the new fence line by the pool, trimmed up Ligustrum, and trimmed a Yaupon Holly to the right side of the pool house that was hanging over the roof line.
- The crew plans to apply: 1) Trimtect treatment to shrubbery to regulate growth, and 2) Pre-emergent to turf. Neither treatment is harmful to humans or dogs, but it is advised that people wait at least 30 minutes to walk dogs on the turf immediately after the treatment is applied. (Board will inform us of timing.)

Woods in Your Backyard

Clemson Extension recently presented an all-day wooded lot class at Clemson Botanical Gardens. Since IOB and some community members own wooded (adjacent) lots or wooded backyards, this information might be helpful... Especially if you're trying to create a healthy habitat that attracts songbirds and pollinators, and contain heavy water runoff.

Healthy wooded lots with various tree and plant layers - overstory trees, understory trees, shrubbery and herbaceous plants - provide food sources for many kinds of wildlife. This attracts nesting birds and cavity-dwelling animals, as well as beneficial insects. When trees die, increased sunlight encourages new growth to replace them.



Screech Owls nest in tree hollows



Chickadees love a snag



Blue birds use cavities as nesting places

Snags and fallen logs decompose and are valuable to worms and caterpillars, feeding woodpeckers, songbirds, lizards, snakes and many other critters. About 85 species of North American birds nest in cavities in trees, including bats and bluebirds. No man-made structure matches the ecological usefulness of a sizable dead tree. If practical, keep these dead trees, snags and downed branches to feed wildlife. Remove obstructive trees or branches that create a safety hazard.



Fallen logs are fodder for insects



Cardinals seek shelter and nest amid the Saw Palmettos



Dead trees that don't pose a hazard benefit the forest

While deer like an easy meal, a wooded lot full of acorns, berries, hickory nuts, herbaceous flowering plants, twigs, lichen and mushrooms can attract them away from your yard and into the forest. Brush piles attract snakes, rabbits and flushing birds. All of this encourages natural tree recruitment and pollinators. (Note: Snakes especially are a sign that your habitat is healthy. Snakes eat rodents that carry ticks, thus helping in the battle against Lyme disease.)

If you want to promote good wildlife habitat on your property, learn to differentiate between invasive species like Chinese Tallow and good wildlife shrubs, thicket-forming cover, and beneficial trees. Leave the good and cut or spot spray the bad. Good things for wildlife include saw palmettos, myrtle, beauty berries, yaupon holly and other native plants. Consider mowing paths rather than whole fields. Not only will you be able to walk around and enjoy your land, but you'll also be able to appreciate all of the cover and wildlife that you spared.



Example of a wooded lot with a variety of native shrubs, thickets, twigs, fungi and tall trees

Remember, mature trees are invaluable in managing water runoff. A mature oak tree can collect up to 100 gallons of water per day. Whereas one inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof creates 600 gallons of runoff.