



# Latino Environmental Education Network Newsletter

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## Did you know?

- Latinos make up 25% of Collier County and 15% of Lee County's population.
- Immigrant Latinos come from countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America
- The mission of the Latino Environmental Education Network is to target environmental education efforts to an audience that has not been reached by traditional programs.

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## An Environmental Education Meeting for Latinos; Where everyone is welcome by Ernesto Lasso De La Vega

If you feel more comfortable listening to presentations and asking questions in Spanish, a workshop for the Hispanic community is on your way. The Latino Environmental Education Network (LEEN) is hosting four meetings at the beginning of next year in Fort Myers, Arcadia, Bowling Green, and Immokalee. The workshops are free and will be held in Spanish. They are open to anyone who is willing to learn ways to save money, water and energy at home; ways to protect our precious water resources; and what can be done to enjoy nature in Florida while leaving a memorable legacy for future generations. The meetings are sponsored by the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) and executed by members of the LEEN group, as well as local sponsors that have expressed a great understanding and interest in motivating the Latino population to protect our environment. Organizations such as the Hispanic Institute from Hodges University, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, University of Florida IFAS Extension and the CHNEP are interested in identifying leaders in Latino communities that can extend these efforts by determining the needs and avenues of communication in order to keep the Latino and other minorities informed, aware and active about the environment.



All meetings are scheduled on Saturday mornings, from 9 am to noon, finishing with a free lunch.

Please accept our invitation to the event closest to your home and mark your calendar for any of the following dates and locations

Date	City	Location
January 31	Fort Myers	Hodges University 4501 Colonial Blvd., Ft. Myers
March 7	Arcadia	South Florida Community College 2251 NE Turner Ave., Arcadia
April 11	Bowling Green	South Florida Community College 2968 US 17 N, Bowling Green
May 9	Immokalee	Career and Service Center 750 South 5th St., Immokalee

For more information please contact Martha Avila, Lee County Sustainability Specialist at 239.533.7506 or [avilamc@leegov.com](mailto:avilamc@leegov.com)



## How to Contribute to Family Needs During Tough Times

by *Martha Avila, Lee County Sustainability Specialist*

By trying to find an economic and environmental balance you may find some simple actions that can be put in practice in our daily lives. For example, during fragile economic times, we should be cautious with our consumption of energy and water. Here are some easy actions to take that could help you:

- Turn off lights, televisions or other electronics when not in use.
- Take shorter showers to cut down on water and electric bills.
- Don't stand with the refrigerator door open while deciding what to eat.
- Limit cable/phone/computer usage. Help figure out your family's real needs for these services vs. wants and ways to meet them, like using the public library on-line services for homework.
- Hang up your clothes after wearing so they wear longer and need less washing and care.
- Volunteer to help with family chores in lieu of paying for services like cleaning, lawn care, take-out, or childcare.
- Try to eat a balanced diet. Take lunch to work and stop tossing disposable takeout waste. – together annual cost savings: \$1,560
- Drive smart, follow speed limits and keep your tires properly inflated to improve fuel economy.-Annual cost savings: \$600
- Buy a reusable water bottle and stop buying bottled water.-Annual cost savings: \$500



This may be a stressful time when family members need to lean on each other more than usual. Working out a budget and ways to conserve energy and water together can help. Talk to each other and listen to each other's concerns. Maintaining communication allows families to keep each other up to date on the family budget needs. All members of the family can participate in different ways to reduce expenses and reduce their impact on the environment.

[http://solutionsforyourlife.com/hot\\_topics/families\\_and\\_consumers/save\\_money\\_save\\_energy.html](http://solutionsforyourlife.com/hot_topics/families_and_consumers/save_money_save_energy.html)

## Florida Friendly Landscaping – by *Alberto Chavez, Project Greenscape Coordinator*

Florida Friendly Landscaping describes practices, materials, or choices that help to protect Florida's natural resources and protect the environment. There are nine Florida Friendly landscaping principles:

1. Right Plant, Right Place
2. Water Efficiently
3. Fertilize Appropriately
4. Mulch
5. Attract Wildlife
6. Manage Yard Pests Responsibly
7. Recycle Yard Waste
8. Reduce Stormwater Runoff
9. Protect the Waterfront.



These principles focus on the prevention of nonpoint source pollution of surface and ground waters through minimizing of leaching and runoff; encouraging water conservation; and promoting native biodiversity of species within the Florida landscape. Florida Friendly practitioners have also sighted anecdotal benefits such as minimizing health risks from irresponsibly applied chemicals and personal satisfaction from being a good steward of the land.

Urban landscapes reduce soil erosion, runoff, leaching, noise, heat, dust and glare and they provide wildlife habitat. The health of Florida's waterbodies depends to a great extent of how they are maintained.

Charlie Crist, the Governor of Florida, declared March 2008 as Florida- Friendly Landscaping Month

For more information on Florida Friendly Landscaping visit> [www.floridayards.org](http://www.floridayards.org)

## What you should know about Ciguatera Fish Poisoning by Bryan Fluech, Collier County Sea Grant

Ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP) is the most common seafood-borne illness in the world. It is caused by eating certain tropical reef fish that have a build-up of toxins in their flesh. The toxins are caused by microorganisms called dinoflagellates that naturally occur in the water. Because ciguatera toxins accumulate up the food chain, larger predatory reef fish tend to be more susceptible to CFP such as barracuda, amberjacks, king mackerel, hogfish, trigger fish, and certain types of grouper.



CFP is described as an acute neurological disease, but also includes gastrointestinal and cardiovascular symptoms. Initially victims may experience nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting and diarrhea. Subsequent symptoms can include headaches, blurred vision, joint pain, irregular pulse rate, decreased blood pressure and tingling sensations in the extremities. One of the most prominent symptoms of CFP is temperature reversal; cold objects feel warm, and warm objects feel cold. Symptoms may appear within hours of consuming contaminated fish. They can last for days to weeks, but neurological symptoms may recur for months to years.

Unfortunately; infected fish cannot be detected by appearance, taste or smell, and toxins cannot be completely destroyed or removed by cooking or freezing it. Learning about the most susceptible species and regions remains the best method for avoiding this form of food poisoning. Consumers purchasing tropical marine fish known to harbor CFP should patronize reputable dealers and restaurants. Fishermen should exercise caution when targeting affected species. To learn about ciguatera fish poisoning visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ciguatera/>.

## The Gulf of Mexico Alliance by Bridget Washburn, Gulf Alliance Educator

A spectacular variety of sea life, including killer whales, sea turtles and unexplored deepwater corals, resides within the Gulf. Its coastal region contains half the wetlands in the United States and many rich natural habitats including bays, estuaries, tidal flats, barrier islands, forests and mangrove swamps.

These ecological communities also play an essential role in sustaining some of the nation's most vital economic and recreational industries.

The five U.S. States that border the Gulf of Mexico have a gross domestic product of over \$2 trillion (Bureau of Economic Analysis 2006). The Ocean and Coastal Council recently reported that Florida's 2006 coastal economy contributed 5.8 million jobs and \$226 billion in wages! Much of the economic activity depends on the health of the Gulf's natural resources.

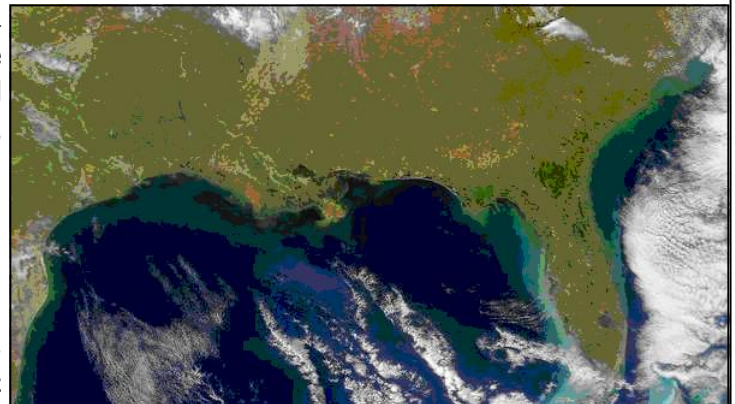


Photo credit: SeaWiFS Project, NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center and ORBIMAGE

To enhance and protect the Gulf's rich coastal ecosystems as well as its coastal communities, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance was formed in 2004. The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a partnership between the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas as well as thirteen federal agencies. The goal of the Alliance is to significantly increase regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico region. The Alliance focuses its efforts on six priority issues, including water quality, reduction of nutrient inputs, habitat identification, coastal community resiliency, environmental education and ecosystem conservation and restoration.

For more information on the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and what you can do to protect the Gulf, visit [www.supportthegulf.org](http://www.supportthegulf.org) or [www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org](http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org).

## Poison Control Hotline

Sometimes, being out in the environment has its consequences. While snake bites, jellyfish stings and other negative encounters with wildlife are rare, it is good to be prepared in case of an emergency. In the old days, if someone was bitten, or a child ate something dangerous, one had to ask a family member, a neighbor, or a friend what to do. Now, anyone in the United States can call the Poison Control Hotline and get expert medical help right away, for free. The Poison Control Hotline is staffed by doctors, nurses and pharmacists and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your local Centro del Control del Envenenamiento is located in Miami, and all of the poison specialists are bilingual English-Spanish. A translator is available other languages as well. Poison specialists are experienced in helping with all kinds of poisoning, whether it is a child who has sipped bleach, an adult who has been stung or bitten, or a worker who has been exposed to a chemical or pesticide. Poison Center services are free to everyone and most cases can be handled over the phone, in your own home. All calls to the Poison Center are completely confidential. No insurance or proof of legal status is required. The goal is to get rapid answers to individuals in need of help. The Poison Control Hotline is 1-800-222-1222. Save this number in your cell phone – it may save you one day!

## Mark Your Calendar

**Thursday, January 22. New Fishing Regulations Workshop.** Sponsored by Florida Sea Grant. At Bass Pro Shops  
Contact 239-533-7518

**Thursday, January 29. Green Industries Best Management Practices Certification .** Sponsored by Rookery Bay & Project Greenscape. \$25. Registration required. Contact 239-417-6310

**Tuesday, March 10. Urban Pond Management .** Sponsored by Rookery Bay & Project Greenscape. Registration required. Contact 239-417-6310

**Ongoing, Nine Principles of a Florida Friendly Yard,** Sponsored by Florida Yards and Neighborhoods, Contact 239-533-7523

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