



**BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES FOR
THE ADOPTION OF
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
LANDSCAPING**

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RESEARCH QUESTION:

**WHY HAVE ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY YARDS NOT BECOME
MAINSTREAM IN FLORIDA?**

WHO ARE THE KEY PLAYERS

- The Property Owner or Manager
- The Nurseries
- The Landscape Designers
- The Landscape Maintenance Companies
- Those who regulate and train (universities, Gov. Agencies, & Professional Organizations)
And of course,
- The “Others”!



WHAT WE INVESTIGATED

- Attitudes of Target Audience
 - Perceptions and beliefs:
 - about environmentally-friendly landscaping
 - About their ability to do it
 - Actual ability to perform the behavior
- Social Norms
- Environmental Factors
 - Regulations
 - “Infrastructure”

HOW WE INVESTIGATED

- Formal & informal interviews
- Pre/post presentation questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Recording of comments during pilot studies
- Opportunistic conversations



WHAT WE FOUND OUT

The Barriers

Many homeowner's lack:

- Interest
- Design skills
- Gardening skills
- Time
- Information on designers and/or maintenance professionals
- Monetary resources
- An overall landscape design
- A combination of the above, or ALL of the above

Many existing EF yards typically suffer from:

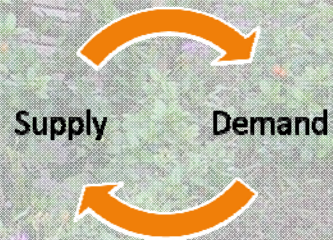
- Poor design
- Poor maintenance
- Bad reputation



In Florida, there is lack of good examples of EF yards

There is inadequate “infrastructure”:

- Native nurseries/plant variety
- EF Designers
- EF maintenance professionals



Things are complex:

- EF yards often require more knowledge and gardening skills



There are Social Barriers:

- **Neighborhood associations' covenants** (some require residents to have X% of turf in their yards and/or to use St. Augustine grass, or other restrictions).
- **Love affair with turf and the ultra-manicured, "stable" look.**
- **Lack of a social support network for those who venture into EF gardening.**
- **The do it yourself, by yourself tradition** (lack of mechanisms and incentives to foster more interaction between the homeowner and their yards)



THE GOOD NEWS

- **Interest in addressing barriers and engaging in EF landscaping** (nurseries, maintenance companies, and landscape designers)
- **Interest in retro-fitting yards** among increasing numbers of homeowners
- **More training programs for landscape maintenance professionals** (developed by universities and agencies in collaboration with the industry)
- **The Critical mass** (number of people/communities) **needed to reach a tipping point not as large as formerly envisioned**

WHAT CAN WE DO TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESS ?

- **Develop collaborations** with and among:
 - Designers experienced in EF landscapes
 - Native plant nurseries
 - Maintenance companies that are experienced (or willing to be trained) in EF landscape maintenance practices.
- **Create a list of native plant nurseries & EF landscape professionals** (make it easily available)
- **Design and install demonstration landscapes,** (for different plant communities and aesthetics) (work with communities and local governments to do so)
- **Develop sample landscape designs** for the main plant communities of the area



- **Demonstrate and publicize the economic benefits of EF landscaping** (to both the landscape professionals and the property owner)
- **Develop a variety of incentives** in partnerships with the business community (focus on those business that reinforce connectivity with the natural world)
- **Work with entire communities** and not just with individual homeowners! (community teams, HOA board contacts...)
- **Use a participatory action research strategy** (collaborative process)
- **Develop social networks** to support and reinforce individuals' efforts within a community
- **Involve** individuals (not only in the design and installation of their own landscape, but in that of neighbors or others)



- **Reconnect people with their yards/green areas & the wildlife they support** -offer workshops such as a BioBlitz-



- **Use messages that are encouraging, understanding and re-assuring.**
- **Facilitate, assist, and follow-up until the behaviors and community social networks are fully established!**
- **Recognize as often and wide as possible** (signs, radio, T.V., website,...)
- **Contribute to the design of training programs for landscape maintenance professionals** (we need "true gardeners " not just BMP experts)
- **Encourage local universities to include more ecology classes and instruction on native plants** for landscape architects

◆ **Education is good, but definitely not enough! Just one of MANY tools needed.**

◆ **You must empower: facilitate, assist, and provide simple, clear, relevant resources.**

◆ **Collaborative approaches that recognize the importance of community and societal factors are crucial.**

◆ **Don't ask too much from people all at once.**

◆ **Work first with those communities that are ready (contemplation & action stages)**

◆ **Currently, the bottom line for a vast majority of the audience boils down to aesthetics and convenience.**

◆ **Reconnect people to nature!**

◆ **Ultimately, for EF landscaping to become mainstream, a landscaping cultural shift must take place.**

