

For Immediate Release: April 8, 2009

Contact: Ellen Fisher: 386-424-3003, efisher@ucnsb.org

UCNSB Demonstration Garden Encourages Water-Wise Landscaping

New Smyrna Beach, Fla. – The Utilities Commission, City of New Smyrna Beach, completed a water-wise demonstration garden in the parking lot of its downtown New Smyrna Beach office as part of continuing efforts to encourage water conservation.

The garden, designed by Lindley’s Nursery and Garden Center, features over 25 plants, shrubs, and trees that are well-suited for Florida’s climate. The plants featured are either native to Florida or are Florida-friendly, meaning the plants have adapted to the area’s climate and require little water for upkeep.

“More than half of residential water use occurs outdoors,” said Ellen Fisher, UCNSB’s Public Information Manager. “We hope our demonstration garden shows residents that you can have a beautiful garden while still conserving our natural resources.”

The garden, a year in the making, survived this past winter’s chilling temperatures and sprung back to life with little maintenance at the onset of warmer weather, displaying the resiliency of Florida-native and Florida-friendly plants.

The garden features:

- More than 25 Florida-native or Florida-friendly plant, shrubs, and trees.
- Themed beds, including a bed devoted to beachside-friendly plants and two beds featuring a low-water turf replacement.
- Renewable mulches, including pine straw, rubber, and rock mulches also featured.
- A drip-line sprinkler system which uses less water and discourages weeds.
- Information cards throughout the garden about each plant, sun and water needs, as well as bird/butterfly/bee attraction notes (if applicable).

The garden is made up of several parts: the large bed marked by the oak trees and several smaller, themed beds around the parking lot. The small bed adjacent to the large bed and closest to Live Oak Street features plants which are particularly beachside-friendly because of their noted salt and wind tolerance. Two smaller beds closest to the Canal Street entrance feature perennial peanut, which is being recommended and used state-wide as a low-water turf replacement.

All the beds use renewable pine straw as a mulch, which has worked well to keep weeds at bay and the soil moist. Examples of rubber and rock mulch are also displayed in the parking lot and in the UCNSB lobby.

The garden also features a drip-line sprinkler system on most of the beds. The benefits of the drip line system are that the water is administered directly to the plants, so the total amount needed is reduced from the overhead sprinkler system. In addition, the weeds are not watered, and thus, do not live as comfortably as they once did.

Residents are invited to view the garden at 200 Canal St. Information about the garden and its plants are available in the lobby and online at www.ucnsb.org.

Photos of the demonstration garden:



Wide view of the main bed.



Closer view of the main bed.



A smaller bed connecting to the main bed.



Red-Tip Cocoplum in the "beachside" bed.



Dune Daisy in the “beachside” bed.



Eco Turf Perennial Peanut in the main bed.

High-resolution copies of the above photos available upon request.

About UCNSB:

The Utilities Commission, City of New Smyrna Beach, (UCNSB) provides electric, water, wastewater, reuse water, and Internet service in the greater New Smyrna Beach area. UCNSB also offers conservation rebates and other programs, such as its low-flow showerhead exchange and free residential energy audits. Information about these and other conservation efforts are available on the UCNSB website, www.ucnsb.org.

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