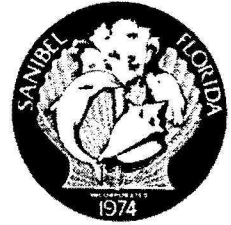




**User's Manual**  
**For**  
**Sanibel—A Barrier Island Sanctuary**

**As of July 2005**

**User's Manual**  
**For**  
**Sanibel—A Barrier Island Sanctuary**



Welcome to Sanibel! We're pleased that you care about our island. This unique Community didn't just happen. Thirty years of hard work by countless citizens have created our land use plan and the mechanisms for continuing to preserve an environment built around ecological zones and provisions for wildlife corridors. Whether we keep this unique place depends on you, how you treat the environment and how active you are in ensuring its protection.

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The Sanibel City Council

Inspired by:  
Sanibel Vegetation Committee  
First Edition—2005



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Sanibel is unique because of our commitment to protect our vegetation, wildlife and beaches. The purpose of this manual is to provide the residents of Sanibel with practical information about our unique and special environment.

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# I. SANIBEL VISION STATEMENT

## BACKGROUND

To provide a sense of direction for the future, this Vision Statement was set forth as a confirmation of the community's shared values and goals to guide future decisions.

## SANCTUARY

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary, one in which a diverse population lives in harmony with the island's wildlife and natural habitats. The Sanibel community must be vigilant in the protection and enhancement of its sanctuary characteristics.

The City of Sanibel will resist pressures to accommodate increased development and redevelopment that is inconsistent with the Sanibel Plan, including this Vision Statement.

The City of Sanibel will guard against and, where advisable, oppose human activities in other jurisdictions that might harm the Island's sensitive habitats, including the Island's surrounding aquatic ecosystems.

## COMMUNITY

Sanibel is and shall remain a small town community whose members choose to live in harmony with one another and with nature; creating a human settlement distinguished by its diversity, beauty, uniqueness, character and stewardship.

**Diversity:** The City of Sanibel cherishes its cultural, social, ecological and economic diversity, and will endeavor to maintain it.

**Beauty:** The City of Sanibel will foster quality, harmony and beauty in all forms of human alteration of the environment. The community aesthetic is defined as a casual style; one which is adapted to a relaxed island quality of life and respectful of local history, weather, culture and natural systems.

**Uniqueness:** The City of Sanibel chooses to remain unique through a development pattern which reflects the predominance of natural conditions and characteristics over human intrusions. All forms of development and redevelopment will preserve the community's unique small town identity.

**Character:** The City of Sanibel chooses to preserve its rural character in its setting within an urbanizing county. "Auto-urban" development influences will be avoided. The commercialization of natural resources will be limited and strictly controlled.

**Stewardship:** In keeping with the foregoing principles, the City of Sanibel affirms a land ethic that recognizes landholding – both public and private – as a form of stewardship, involving responsibilities to the human and natural communities of the Island and its surroundings, and to future generations.

## ATTRACTION

The Sanibel community recognizes that its attractiveness to visitors is due to the Island's quality as sanctuary and as community. The City of Sanibel will welcome visitors who are drawn by, and are respectful of, these qualities; it will resist pressures to accommodate visitor attractions and activities that compromise these qualities.

## HIERARCHY OF VALUES

This three-part statement of the community's vision of its future is hierarchy; one in which the dominant principle is Sanibel's sanctuary quality. Sanibel shall be developed as a community only to the extent to which it retains and embraces this quality of sanctuary. Sanibel will serve as attraction only to the extent to which it retains its desired qualities as sanctuary and community.

**Vision Statement adopted by Ordinance No.97-16**

October 11, 1997



## II. Participating in Sanibel Decision Making



### Dear Friend of Sanibel,

As the City Council, Sanibel's elected policymaking body, we appreciate your interest in how to preserve Sanibel's environmental uniqueness.

We'd like to invite you to take part in this process by coming to meetings, sending us emails ([sancouncil@mysanibel.com](mailto:sancouncil@mysanibel.com)), calling (239) 472-3700, or applying to serve on one of our citizen committees. This is how it works:

- Council meets every two weeks (First and third Tuesdays of each month, 9:00 a.m.) to vote on policy decisions.
- The City Manager and City Attorney, who work for City Council, direct the staff to develop materials necessary to making and carrying out those policy decisions.
- The Planning Commission is appointed by the City Council. They both prepare and update the City's comprehensive land use plan (*The Sanibel Plan*) and the accompanying laws (*The Land Development Code*.) They also act as a quasi-judicial board to review interpretations of the *Code*. (You can find these documents at the Sanibel Public Library) They meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 9:00 a.m.
- City Advisory Committees are appointed by City Council to study and prepare recommendations on their area of expertise. The Vegetation Committee is one of these committees. The reference section at the end of this manual lists all of the City's committees. The main city switchboard can tell you when they meet by calling (239) 472-3700.
- A lengthy list of community based organizations and agencies are critical partners collaborating with the local government to protect the island's environment. They are listed at the end of this manual.

This particular manual was born in the City's Vegetation Committee. Committee members developed the idea nearly four years ago. They waited until the City's new vegetation ordinance was approved to complete the document. The manual idea has become so popular that staff and Council have expanded it to cover other matters important to island living. On the next page, please find the full list of the Vegetation Committee Members between 2002-2005, and the names of the sub-committee who has done most of the work.

In conclusion, the Council hopes you join us in recognizing that what each of us do will determine whether we can keep the unique environmental characteristics of our island. We thank you for reading this manual and for helping in our preservation efforts.

Sincerely,

**Sanibel City Council**

*Carla Brooks Johnston*  
Mayor

*Mick Denham*  
Vice-Mayor

*Steve Brown*  
Councilman

*Jim Jennings*  
Councilman

*Tom Rothman*  
Councilman

## SANIBEL VEGETATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2002-2005

### 2002

Kathy Boone  
Tom Hansen  
Ann McCullough  
Julie Schwartz  
Ann Talcott  
Arthur "Art" Weissbach

Paul Duval  
Ava Hinojosa-Feldman  
Tom Rothman  
Dee Serage  
Harold "Hal" Theiss  
William "Bill" Wollschlager

Gloria Hannan  
Robin Krivanek  
Don Schwartz  
Ellen Steele  
Berdenna Thompson  
Richard Young

### 2003

Kathy Boone  
Robin Krivanek  
Julie Schwartz  
Ellen Steele  
Berdenna Thompson  
Richard Young

Paul Duval  
Ann McCullough  
Tom Rothman  
Ann Talcott  
Arthur "Art" Weissbach

Gloria Hannan  
Don Schwartz  
Dee Serage  
Harold "Hal" Theiss  
William "Bill" Wollschlager

### 2004

Kathy Boone  
Phyllis Gresham  
Robin Krivanek  
Don Schwartz  
Ellen Steele  
Berdenna Thompson

Lena Brown  
Gloria Hannan  
Ann McCullough  
Julie Schwartz  
Ann Talcott  
Arthur "Art" Weissbach

Paul Duval  
Tom Hansen  
Tom Rothman  
Dee Serage  
Harold "Hal" Theiss  
William "Bill" Wollschlager

### 2005

Paul Duval  
Robin C. Krivanek  
Julie Schwartz  
Berdenna Thompson  
William "Bill" Wollschlager

Phyllis Gresham  
Ann McCullough  
Ann Talcott  
Ellen Steele

Gloria Hannan  
Don Schwartz  
Harold "Hal" Theiss  
Art Weissbach

Special Thanks to Carol Rothman, West Gulf Digital

**Thanks to William Wollschlager, Vegetation Committee**

**Resource Book Sub-Committee Members:**

**Julie Schwartz, Vegetation Committee**  
**Gloria Hanna, Vegetation Committee**  
**Don Schwartz, Vegetation Committee**  
**Ann Talcott, Vegetation Committee**  
**Beth Degrauwe, SCCF Native Plant Nursery Director**

### III. Vegetation

#### A. Overview of Plants—Especially Native Plants and Mangroves

Native vegetation is protected by City of Sanibel law.<sup>3</sup> It is against the law to remove or destroy any native vegetation (subject to certain size and height considerations) without a City permit.

Native trees and shrubs provide an attractive island atmosphere and are essential in preserving Sanibel's habitat. Their presence is critical to the survival of many species of wildlife. If not recognized and protected, many rare native plants may become extinct.

A native plant is one that has evolved in our sub-tropical climate and sandy soil. "Florida native plant" refers to those species occurring within the State boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best available scientific and historical documentation. More specifically, those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impacts and alterations of the landscape. Native plants require much less water than non-natives. Much of our native vegetation can withstand months of drought. Most species also have adapted to survive our intense summer heat, as well as days in standing water after torrential summer downpours. They can flourish without fertilization or insecticidal spraying, avoiding the introduction of harmful chemicals into the environment. Planting native saves you money and water use.

Native plants:

1. Provide habitat and food sources for wildlife.
2. Have adapted to this environment. Most are drought and salt tolerant.
3. Do not require frequent watering once established.
4. Do not require fertilizers and pesticides.

For new or substantially improved structures, the City requires that at least seventy-five (75) percent of all in-ground trees, shrubs, and groundcover by count be native.<sup>3</sup> It is recommended that there be a diversity of native plants. The remaining 25% of the vegetation may be either native or non-invasive non-native species. If the property owner chooses to use non-native plants, the non-native plants may not exceed 25% by count of installed plants in each of the three following categories: 1) trees ; 2) shrubs or shrub-like plants; and 3) ground cover.

The use of native plants is encouraged for all landscape projects.

The City of Sanibel Vegetation Standards usually require that property owners transplant all good quality native plants (in the approved area of development) that are greater than 2 inches in diameter 2 feet above the ground or 6 feet tall in total height and shrub-like species greater than 2 feet tall, prior to development.<sup>3</sup>

If you have a plant that you cannot identify, resources you may want to consider are native plant nurseries, or contact the City of Sanibel's Department of Natural Resources at (239) 472-3700.

One of the most abused native plants is the Cabbage or Sabal palm. The Cabbage/Sabal palm is Florida's state tree. Poor landscaping practices have contributed to the death or deformity of these important trees. Please follow these guidelines:

Cut only fronds that are completely brown, back to the trunk. Cutting green fronds:

- Steals the palms' source of nutrients. Permanently stunts growth, invites disease and reduces natural resilience to high winds.
- Reduces valuable shade, increasing ground water evaporation and creating a need for irrigation.
- Over-pruned palms develop bottleneck trunks. In high winds and hurricanes this stressed and weakened point will cause the palm to break off and die.
- Makes the palm's heart cold sensitive and susceptible to disease and death.
- Causes wildlife to lose valuable food, shelter and nesting area.

Please note that harsh pruning can be harmful to your vegetation.

Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chain saws and climbing spikes cause damage, wounds made by these implements allow disease to enter the palm.

Mulch around palms to conserve water and to eliminate the need for weed eaters.

### 1. Native, non-invasive

The vast majority of native plants are non-invasive. A list of horticulturally available native plants can be obtained from the City's website at [www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com), or at the City of Sanibel Planning Department or the Native Plant Nursery at SCCF.

### 2. Native, invasive

The native invasive vines such as coin, morning glory, nickerbean, Virginia creeper and white vine may be removed by the homeowner without a permit.

## **Mangroves**

Mangroves are tropical trees growing in tidal areas and are absolutely vital to the ecology of Florida. Both the State of Florida and the City of Sanibel recognize the importance of mangroves and have established laws for their protection.<sup>3,4</sup> The State of Florida has delegated authority to the City of Sanibel to regulate the trimming and alteration of mangroves on the Island.

There are three types of mangroves:

- Red Mangrove – *Rhizophora mangle*
- Black Mangrove – *Avicennia germinans*
- White Mangrove – *Languncularia racemosa*

Mangroves are extremely valuable:

- They provide essential habitat for more than 80 percent of the finfish and shellfish that are sought by commercial and sports fishermen.
- Their decomposing leaves and detritus are the basis of the marine food chain, and account almost entirely for an estuary's productivity.
- They block wind and wave energy during storms and stabilize soil with their roots, protecting upland property.
- They improve water quality through uptake of nutrients.

- They are used by herons, egrets and other wading birds as roosting and nesting sites.

Several threatened or endangered species - the green turtle, hawksbill turtle, Atlantic Ridley turtle, American crocodile, bald eagle, wood stork, and the piping plover - depend on mangroves for their survival.

Stringent criteria involving notification, inspection and permitting apply to any trimming or alteration of mangroves. The law provides for substantial fines and extensive mitigation for any violation.<sup>4</sup>

**AN INSPECTION BY THE CITY'S NATURAL RESOURCES STAFF IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO TRIMMING MANGROVES.**

## **B. Exotic Plants**

Non-native or "non-indigenous" plants have been introduced on purpose and accidentally to Florida since the first Europeans arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that as much as 29% of all of Florida's plant species growing on their own are not native. Because such a plant is frequently not suitable for our climate or soil conditions, it requires human help if it is to thrive. The non-native plant may need regular watering, fertilizing and possibly spraying. In the process, harmful chemicals are introduced into our ecosystem, and water is used in excessive quantities.

### **1. Non-native, non-invasive**

Not all non-native plants pose a threat to our native species. These non-invasive plants may be used within the 25% non-native allowance. Staff members at the Native Plant Nursery can suggest acceptable non-native, non-invasive plants.

### **2. Non-native, invasive**

Many non-native plant species are invasive, having the ability to act like weeds and can spread extensively on their own, displacing native plants and wildlife as well as disrupting natural ecological processes. Nearly forty of these plant species call Sanibel home. Conservation land managers continue to remove them from Sanibel's natural areas and in an effort to reduce and eventually eliminate the spread of the "worst offenders" from the Island, the City of Sanibel has enacted legislation regulating certain invasive non-native pest plant species. These species are not permitted to be intentionally planted, transplanted or otherwise introduced in any way on Sanibel. Before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, they are required to be removed from the property, which must be maintained free of these plants in perpetuity. A current list of these plants follows; however, always

check with the Planning or Natural Resource Department for new additions.

Sanibel has eight plants that are not allowed.<sup>4</sup> They are:

1. Brazilian pepper (Schinus terebinthefolius)

2. Cajeput (Melaleuca quinquenervia)
3. Earleaf acacia (Acacia auriculiformis)
4. Java plum (Syzygium cumini)
5. Exotic inkberry (Scaevola frutescens)
6. Lead tree (Leucaena leucocephala)
7. Snake plant (Sansevieria hyacinthoides)  
(aka bowstring hemp, mother-in-law's tongue)
8. Air potato (Dioscorea bulbifera)

Australian pines are also considered invasive non-native plants, and may not be propagated, sold, planted, or transplanted within the State of Florida. Their removal is strongly encouraged, but not required by City Ordinance.

There are also undesirables that we urge you not to plant. Some examples in this category are:

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Carrotwood         | (Cupaniopsis anacardioides) |
| Cuban laurel       | (Ficus retusa 'Nitida')     |
| Mahoe/Sea hibiscus | (Hibiscus tiliaceus)        |
| Mexican Petunia    | (Ruellia brittonia)         |
| Umbrella tree      | (Schefflera actinophylla)   |
| Wandering jew      | (Tradescantia zebrina)      |
| Wedelia            | (Wedelia trilobata)         |

Follow-up maintenance for re-growth is CRUCIAL when removing and ultimately controlling invasive non-native pest plants.

The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) was founded in Florida in 1984. FLEPPC goals are directed toward building public awareness about the serious threat invasive non-native plants pose to native ecosystems, securing funding and support for control and management of non-native plants, and developing integrated management and control methods to prevent the spread of invasive non-native plants throughout the United States. According to FLEPPC, invasive non-native plants are biological pollutants that wipe out more natural habitat every year than development. FLEPPC lists invasive species in two categories:

- I. Those that are invading and disrupting native plant communities in Florida,
- II. Those that have a potential to do so.

A complete list of invasive non-native plants may be found on their web site [www.fleppc.org](http://www.fleppc.org).

### **C. Vegetation Permits**

A Vegetation Permit is required:<sup>3</sup>

1. To obtain a development permit,
2. For removal of native species over six (6) feet in height, *or* more than two (2) inches in trunk diameter two (2) or more feet above the ground, *or* native shrubs that are more than two (2) feet in height. The Department of Natural Resources should be notified before the removal of any dead or diseased plants – this is for the homeowner's protection,
3. For removal or trimming of any vegetation seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL),

4. For trimming and alteration of mangroves,
5. For removal of Brazilian pepper by use of mechanical equipment or from undeveloped property by hand-held equipment, or otherwise,
6. For chemical control of aquatic plants,
7. For pruning and/or trimming of more than 25% of the leaf area of any native tree or shrub over six (6) feet in height or two (2) or more inches in diameter, two (2) feet or more above the ground.

## **D. Vegetation Contractors<sup>6</sup>**

The City of Sanibel requires all landscape contractors working with vegetation on the Island to possess a valid Certificate of Competency. Sanibel Code<sup>6</sup> requires that all persons hired to plant, transplant, remove, prune, trim trees, plants or shrubs must have a current Competency Card or be supervised by someone who does.

An important exception to the ordinance applies to persons hired and supervised by a homeowner or tenant at a home occupied by the homeowner or tenant. Anyone hired and paid by a homeowner to do yard work involving native vegetation needs a proper occupational license. Work requiring tree trimming, removal or topping also requires a Competency Card. Homeowners will be held responsible for violations of the Vegetation Standards occurring on their property.

An applicant for a Certificate of Competency must pass both a written test covering the vegetation requirements in the Sanibel Land Development Code and a field test consisting of native plant identifications as well as non-native invasives banned on Sanibel. These tests are given several times a year.

Questions about vegetation standards, Vegetation Permits and Certificates of Competency should be directed to the **City of Sanibel Planning Department** at **472-4136** or the **Department of Natural Resources** at **472-3700**. Current listing of contractors holding Competency Cards is available in the **Building Department** at **472-4555**.

## **E. Fertilizers, Pesticides and Herbicides**

Overuse of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides is a major cause of water pollution. Remember that what you put on your lawn and plants ends up in area rivers, bays, beaches and the food chain. Pesticides, herbicides and fungicides should be used only when absolutely necessary and be implemented very sparingly with the least toxic introduced first. Instead of your whole yard, treat only problem areas. For safety's sake, store chemicals in a closed container on a high shelf.

### **1. FERTILIZERS**

Fertilize plants to give them a boost. An organic fertilizer such as cow manure or fish emulsion will provide simple macronutrients to allow a "greening up" and growth spurt.

Native palms DO NOT need fertilization at all. If a native palm in the landscape is struggling



please consult a native plant nursery. Non-natives do need a boost about once a year. Use a well balanced palm fertilizer with minor elements.

**Important: Any time fertilizer is applied the amount of watering doubles. Save water - fertilize during the rainy season.**

#### ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

<i>Fish emulsion</i>	excellent organic fertilizer BUT will attract raccoons so sprinkle area with cayenne pepper or black pepper.
<i>Bone meal</i>	supplies necessary phosphates for sturdy roots; stimulates growth.
<i>Blood meal</i>	provides nitrogen promoting green foliage and lush top growth.
<i>Seaweed and Kelp</i>	conditions soil and stimulates growth.

#### 2. PESTICIDES

Try nontoxic methods first to control pest problems. Employ traps to manage rodent population and use a species-specific biologic, rather than a broad-spectrum toxic compound to eradicate individual pest problems.

#### ORGANIC PEST CONTROL

<i>Boric acid products</i>	use for "sugar ants" and roaches that may invade the kitchen.
<i>Neem</i>	safe for beneficial insects, biodegradable and does not build genetic resistance. May be sprayed or used systemically.
<i>Insecticidal soap</i>	apply with sprayer. Use for aphids, scale; may need repeat treatment.
<i>Diatomaceous earth</i>	use for pest control by sprinkling around infested area. Made from fossils of one-celled diatoms. Sharp edges "nick" insects' outer shells. Best used outdoors; dangerous to breathe. Must be "gardening grade."
<i>Tri-die</i>	use for eradication of carpenter ants; best for spraying into small cracks.
<i>Dipel dust</i>	for caterpillars, web worms, etc.; apply wet with sprayer or dust (1/4 C per gallon of water).
<i>Sulfur</i>	for rust, powdery mildew, spider mites, etc., dust over entire plant or wet and spray (1/4 C per gallon).

Other organic solutions are available from native plant nurseries.

#### 3. HERBICIDES

Herbicides may be used to eradicate troublesome grass and weeds. Weeds can be hand pulled, but if the area is too large, use herbicide spray. The product best suited for the job is Brush-B-Gone (7% Garlon) for woody species, Roundup (only use in upland dry areas) for grasses, and Rodeo (only use in wetlands).



Invasive non-natives such as mahoe and Brazilian pepper are extremely difficult to eliminate in a landscape. For large peppers and mahoe, treat the fresh-cut stump with a 30% solution of Garlon and vegetable oil. When treating, one must cut and then **immediately** paint Garlon solution on the entire stump. Both of these species heal quickly and will sucker if not treated promptly and properly. Hand pull small saplings or spray Brush-B-Gone around the circumference from the ground to a point 12" up the stem.

Note: Those individuals sensitive to poison ivy, may be sensitive to Brazilian pepper.

## **F. Soil, Compost, Mulch, and Sod**

### 1. SOIL

We live on a barrier island that is made up of limestone, sand and shell. The soil pH is high and there is no practical way of lowering it. There simply is too much lime present to neutralize. So choose plants accordingly and remember that native plants tend to tolerate this harsh pH. Also, when planting your landscape, be aware that different areas in your yard could have different soils because of fill. Choose plants that are compatible with the growing conditions (i.e. sunshine, shade, wetland), amend the soil by adding organic matter, such as compost or cow manure, and mulch 3" deep. This will build the structure of the soil by attracting earthworms, providing nutrients, and retaining moisture.

### 2. COMPOST

Sanibel residents may compost. A closed container should be used, as Sanibel has a large raccoon/rodent population and open air composting will contribute to the problem. Several companies carry circular closed containers which are easily turned for mixing. Worm bed systems also work nicely and do not need to be turned because the earthworms do that for you. Remember to keep either system elevated to prevent ants and flooding from heavy summer rains. Both systems are odorless and beneficial for controlling waste. Kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, shredded paper, yard waste, etc. can be incorporated and as the system breaks the elements down, beautiful organic matter is left behind for a happier, healthier yard.

### 3. MULCH

Mulching is an important part of landscaping and the majority of homeowners do not realize its function in the landscape. Mulch:

- Buffers soil temperature
- Prevents water loss by evaporation
- Improves water filtration
- Prevents erosion
- Suppresses weeds
- Organic matter from mulch decomposition builds soil structure and enhances pH

To further promote the use of the mulch, the City will deliver mulch (minimum 1 dump truck load) to neighborhood or condominium common areas free of charge; and load landscapers' trucks to deliver mulch to individual homes, free of charge. Please call the Public Works Department at (239) 472-6397 with any questions, suggestions, or to make arrangements for the delivery of mulch.

Environmentally friendly mulches:

Pallet

Old pallets shredded and bagged.

Eucalyptus

Currently a renewable resource raised on plantations.

Inhibits germination of weeds.

Melaleuca (Cajeput)

Inhibits germination of weeds.

Termites do not eat (research through University of Florida – Gainesville).

Pine Bark

By-product of the forestry industry.

Pine Straw

Pine plantations where it is raked and baled.

High nutrients.

Inhibits germination of weeds.

Australian Pine

Chipped Australian pine trimmings.

Utility

Recycled tree waste / right of way prunings.

High nutrients.

Caution: know the source - may contain seeds of invasive non-natives

Please do not use Cypress mulch – it is not raised on plantations. Native stands are being destroyed for mulch.

It is recommended that you keep a 3" to 4" thick layer of mulch on your beds.

4. SOD

Minimize sodded areas. We live on a barrier island which means water is critical in our lives. A year-round green lawn necessitates chemical applications (fertilizers, herbicides, etc.) that are released through our porous soil as runoff causing algae blooms and contamination of canals and bayous. Less sod means less mowing, less water use.

IT'S WHAT YOU APPLY TO YOUR SOD THAT MAKES IT UNDESIRABLE. MOW WHAT GROWS!

## **G. Landscaping for Wildlife**

SCCF's Landscaping for Wildlife offers a home certification program that encourages homeowners to view their landscapes from a perspective of providing year-round food, shelter, water and nesting areas for birds, butterflies and mammals. For more information about this program, please contact SCCF at (239) 472-2329.

## **H. Vegetation Committee**

There has long been an environmental philosophy on Sanibel, resulting in a great diversity of native plants flourishing in a nurturing environment. The Vegetation Committee has played an important role in achieving this.

In addition to the responsibilities cited in the introduction, members conduct on-site vegetation inspections for the City Manager<sup>3</sup> and develop and administer the competency test for certification or re-certification of vegetation contractors.<sup>6</sup>

Committee members must pass the same competency test required of vegetation contractors licensed on Sanibel. Committee members have only advisory authority. A property owner may appeal an inspector's recommendation to the Planning Department.

Members of the Vegetation Committee urge you to learn about native plants and use them to beautify and enhance your landscape.

Future owners need to learn as much as possible about the parcel they are considering buying. Low-lying areas should be especially noted, as well as the types of plants and trees already present. Understand the eco-zone your property is located in - whether mid-island ridge, mangrove coastal wetlands, interior wetlands, or Gulf beach ridge. Visit a native plant nursery such as SCCF's Native Plant Nursery to learn about the species of vegetation that will do best in your location and in different parts of your lot.

## **IV. WILDLIFE**

### Living with Sanibel Wildlife

Do not feed **any** wildlife or provide fresh water for manatees.

#### **A. Alligators**

The alligator is one of the most interesting and valuable of our wildlife species as it patrols and protects bird rookeries from marauding raccoons and supports a healthy fishery.

Never attempt to touch or feed them.<sup>9</sup> An alligator accustomed to being fed by people loses its natural fear of humans and is then more likely to approach people for food. Even the smallest alligator is capable of inflicting a serious bite.

Any molesting or feeding of alligators is strictly against the law anywhere in Florida and may incur a fine of up to \$500.<sup>9</sup>

Children and pets should never be left unattended near alligator habitats. Alligators may be found in any body of water, including swimming pools. Small children freely roaming or playing near open bodies of water could become victims of an attack by an alligator 'conditioned' by irresponsible human feeding. Anyone who feeds an alligator or allows children to play unattended near alligator habitats is contributing to a potential tragedy.

Alligators' short legs limit their traveling on land. Nevertheless, they are capable of remarkably quick speeds over short distances. In the water, their long undulating tails make them very fast swimmers.

Alligators can stay submerged for up to twenty minutes without air.

Baby alligators should be left alone, as their mother is never far away.

If you see someone feeding or harassing an alligator, or you encounter a nuisance alligator, call the Sanibel Police at 472-3111.

#### **B. Gopher tortoises**

In the state of Florida gopher tortoises are listed as a "species of special concern." This listing could be changed to threatened or endangered as habitat continues to be lost and vehicular traffic increases.

Gopher tortoises are **LAND** reptiles. They can **NOT** swim. **DO NOT** try to return them to water.

Their life expectancy is in excess of 60 years. It is prohibited to disturb gopher tortoises or their burrows. The burrows are frequently shared with other wildlife including snakes.

Take care in helping a turtle/tortoise cross the road. If there is no traffic, stand behind the turtle and encourage it to move along. If traffic is a problem, pick the turtle up from behind by placing one hand underneath its body and the other hand holding the rear of the shell. If a car floor mat or piece of cardboard is available, place that under the turtle and lift it up. Always head the turtle in the direction it was going.

#### **B. Raccoons**

Intentional feeding of raccoons is expressly prohibited by law on Sanibel.<sup>8</sup>

Creation or maintenance of any condition which causes or encourages raccoons to feed upon garbage is also expressly prohibited by law on Sanibel.<sup>8</sup> Cover all trash cans, dumpsters and receptacles to prevent raccoons feeding from them.

### **C. Snakes**

Leave snakes alone! All snakes, whether venomous or non-venomous will bite when feeling threatened, and can strike 1/3 to 1/2 their body length.

Sanibel has four poisonous snakes. They are the diamondback rattler, pigmy rattler, cottonmouth (water moccasin) and coral snake.

The very poisonous coral snake is similar in marking and easy to confuse with the non-poisonous scarlet king snake. They both have yellow, black and red bands.

A well known jingle says:

"Red touch yellow, kill a fellow—(coral snake)

"Red touch black, friend of Jack—(scarlet king snake)

\*The indigo snake is Federally protected and all other species are locally protected on Sanibel.

### **D. Feeding Wildlife**

**(NEW INFORMATION ON  
FEEDING WILDLIFE TO BE  
INSERTED HERE)**

### **E. Fishing Hazards to Wildlife**

Don't feed the birds;<sup>7</sup> keep bait covered. Birds don't need fish scraps or bait to survive.

Watch where you cast. Cast netting is not allowed from the pier, only at the beach.

Discard waste, including fishing line, properly; the State of Florida and City of Sanibel prohibits the disposal of fishing line in the water. In addition, the City of Sanibel prohibits the disposal of fish line on beaches, public parks and recreational areas.

All fishing poles must be attended; you must be within arm's length of them. If keeping fish on a stringer, tie a large egg sinker to the end to keep the fish and hook out of birds' reach.

If you should encounter a hooked or injured bird:

Reel the bird in slowly.

If in a boat, use a landing net and boat the bird.

If on a pier, walk the bird to shore slowly.

Cut the line close to the hook and get ALL monofilament off wings, legs and body.

The first step in the rescue of a wild animal is capture. Many times the finder is that animal's only chance of getting the help they need. Almost anyone can contain a wild animal with a few simple instructions. Remember, wild animals are easily frightened and may attack once cornered so, most importantly, protect yourself.

- Have a box or animal carrier ready to contain the animal. Garbage cans, recycling bins and even paper bags will work in a pinch depending on the size of the animal. Poke holes into the box for ventilation.
- Many animals are easily captured with a large towel. Approach the animal slowly, holding the towel out in front of you. Once in range, throw the towel over the animal's head, or entire body if possible. Restrain the head and wrap the towel around the animal. Quickly transfer the animal to a box before they escape.
- If you're catching a bird, the beak is the first thing you grab and the last thing you release.
- A net is very useful when capturing animals that will try to flee or fly. If a body of water is nearby, get between the water and the animal unless you feel like going for a swim.
- Once the animal is contained, transport them to a nearby wildlife hospital ASAP. To decrease the chance of life-threatening stress, minimize noise and movement and keep the animal closed up in the container at all times. The animal should not be able to see out of the container. Do not offer food or water **Feeding a dehydrated or injured animal can be fatal.**

If injured, place in a large box or wrap in a towel and take to Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW), 3883 San-Cap Road, (472-3644).

Fishing license information for the State of Florida can be obtained by dialing 1-888-347-4356 or online at the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commissioner website at [marinefisheries.org](http://marinefisheries.org).

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on the Sanibel Lighthouse Fishing Pier.

## **F. CROW—Hospital for injured animals**

The primary mission of C.R.O.W. is the rescue, care, rehabilitation and eventual release back to the wild of sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife. Inherent in this mission is the education of adults and children to insure their peaceful coexistence with their wild neighbors.

Under the direction of a full time staff veterinarian, C.R.O.W.'s Staff provides high quality

medical care to more than 3400 patients annually, representing nearly 160 different wildlife species. The medical care incorporates both western and eastern modalities such as: surgery, acupuncture, proper nutrition, herbal supplements and physical therapy.

Much of the trauma experienced by wildlife is a direct result of interaction with humans. An important part of the C.R.O.W. mission is to increase public awareness of the perils to which wildlife is subjected in the face of continued land development and human population growth and activity.

C.R.O.W. seeks to prevent these environmental hazards through a variety of educational programs designed to help us respect and protect our native wildlife populations and to preserve the delicate natural balance required by the habitat they must share.

Other wildlife frequently seen on Sanibel include opossums, armadillos, palm rats, mice, marsh rabbits and bobcats.

Dolphins, otters and manatees frequent the bays and Gulf waters around Sanibel.

**Take injured animals to CROW ---- 3883 SanCap Road, 472-3644.**

**Clinic Hours are 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.**

## V. Beaches

### A. Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL)

The original Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) was set down by the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 1974 to define and facilitate protection of Florida's coastal beaches. This line is used in the Sanibel Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Land Development Code to define the land seaward of the CCCL as our Gulf Beach Zone.

The native plant community is extremely important in stabilizing the dynamic area forward of the CCCL. Therefore, human disturbance must be minimized to protect the public interest. Vegetation permits are required for the removal or trimming of any vegetation seaward of the 1974 CCCL, and shall be subject to the following requirements:<sup>3</sup>

- The removal or permanent destruction of native species is prohibited.
- Trimming for height reduction of the following native species is not permitted:
  - Joewood (Jacquinia keyensis)
  - Sea Oats (Uniola paniculata)
  - Bay Cedar (Suriana maritima)
  - Cabbage Palm (Sabal palmetto)
- Trimming shall not reduce the overall height of the individual plant to less than four (4) feet above the substrate.
- Stump removal is never permitted as this would loosen the soil and cause erosion.
- If Australian pines or other listed non-natives have been removed, a re-vegetation plan must be submitted with the permit application.

Before any clearing is done landward of the 1974 line on property abutting or partially within the Gulf Beach Zone, the line must be staked and fenced to prevent intrusion into the zone. The fence must remain in place until all development activity has ceased.

The non-native tree found most often in the Gulf Beach Zone is the Australian pine. Some beach areas are heavily populated with this non-native. The beach Australian pines form dense masses of trees and seedlings just inches apart and are very prone to uprooting in storms. Needles dropping from these trees form a thick blanket that smothers growth of vegetation except poison ivy and an occasional prickly pear cactus. This can be devastating to wildlife that normally would forage on the displaced plants. For these reasons the City and the Vegetation Committee encourage removal of Australian pines along the beaches, and replacement with native vegetation. For each Australian Pine over four inches in diameter, two feet above the ground, that is removed, three suitable native plants, or 9 native ground covers in gallon size containers should be planted for beach stabilization. The City of Sanibel Horticulturally Available Native Plant list may be obtained from the City's website at [www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com), the City's Planning Department or the Native Plant Nursery at SCCF.

The only new structures allowed seaward of the CCCL are elevated dune walkways. Their use is encouraged because they lessen the likelihood of disturbing vegetation in this very sensitive area. A building permit is required for construction of a walkway.



## **B. Sea Turtles**

Sea turtle nesting season is from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year:

- 1) Keep lights out on Gulf beaches because they can potentially discourage female turtles from nesting and disorient hatchlings emerging from nests.
- 2) Sanibel Code<sup>2</sup> prohibits beach furniture and equipment, when not in use, to remain on the beach between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. as it may entangle mother or hatchling sea turtles.

Observe all signage related to nesting sea turtles. Tampering with, being on or within these areas is a Federal offense. It is especially important to keep all pets out of nesting areas.

Plastic bags, fishing line and six-pack holders are deadly entanglements for wildlife. Plastic bags are mistaken for food by sea turtles. Cut open the circles of six-pack holders before disposing of properly.

### *Fresh water turtles:*

There are many species of fresh water turtles in Florida and on Sanibel Island. Some, such as the snapping turtle, alligator snapping turtle and the Florida softshell, are capable of inflicting a very serious bite. Most turtles, however, are benign.

## **C. Birds**

Hand feeding wild birds is illegal.<sup>7</sup> Feeding makes them lose their fear of people. This loss of fear results in a loss of natural feeding habits, exposes them to injury in going after handouts and may cause serious injury to those doing the feeding.

Enjoy watching the birds, but keep a respectful distance.

Observe all signage related to nesting birds. Tampering with or even being on or within these areas is a Federal offense. It is especially important to keep all pets out of nesting areas. Dogs must be leashed at all times for protection of shore birds and public safety.

## **D. Shells**

All Sanibel beaches and near shore waters to one half mile from shore are protected by the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection Rule 46-26. This rule prohibits the harvest and possession of live shellfish. Sand Dollars, Sea Stars and Sea Urchins are also protected. A fine may be incurred.

Strong northwest winds and extreme temperatures in summer and winter often deposit many shells on Sanibel beaches. As those extremes abate, most of the shells are capable of returning to their normal activities. Some species, such as olives, horse conches and others, that live close to shore, can be temporarily beached at these times and even during normal low tides. Even though these live shells are beached and possibly in distress, they are still protected by the City Shelling restrictions, and returning them to the water will likely save most to produce future generations.

## **E. Humans, Beach Paraphernalia, and Beach Behavior**

A number of ordinances deal with the health of the beach and beach creatures. Please

observe them:

Within the City of Sanibel, no person shall harvest or possess at any time any live shellfish. This includes sea stars (starfish), sand dollars and sea urchins.<sup>1</sup> This is to ensure future generations of marine life.

The grooming or non-selective raking of natural organic beach debris (grass, algae, fish, shells, etc.) is not allowed.<sup>2</sup> This debris is a food source for wildlife.

Storage of beach equipment (chairs, umbrellas, tents, boats, etc.) is not allowed on the dune and only on the rest of the beach during daylight hours. This equipment must be moved and stored off the beach between 9:00 PM and 7:00 AM when not in use.<sup>2</sup> This keeps the beach free of man-made obstacles that impede nesting sea turtles, and also prevents the deterioration of critical dune vegetation.

Observe all signage related to nesting birds and sea turtles. Tampering with, or being on or within nesting areas is a Federal offense. It is especially important to keep all pets out of nesting areas.

Dogs must be leashed at all times for protection of shore birds and public safety. Dog waste is to be removed from the beach, not buried.<sup>2</sup>

Lights (interior and exterior) must not illuminate the beach.<sup>2</sup> Female turtles may return to the water without laying eggs if lights disturb them. Sea turtle hatchlings emerge after dark, using the light of the horizon to orient them toward the water. Artificial light near the beach can lead the hatchlings away from the water where they will soon die from dehydration, exhaustion or being crushed by cars.

For the protection of wildlife, fireworks are prohibited on the beach and throughout the Island.<sup>2</sup>

## **Beach Erosion Control**

There are a variety of native plants that prevent beach erosion. All these plants are protected by Sanibel statute,<sup>2</sup> and may not be destroyed or removed. Sea Oats are protected by State statute as well. A list of such plants is available at the City's website at [www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com), the City's Planning Department and the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation Native Plant Nursery. Mowing of the dune area is prohibited and only native vegetation is authorized for planting in this area.<sup>2</sup>

- Please use designated beach walkovers to protect dune vegetation. -

## **VI. Conservation**

### **A. Water**

Water conservation is an issue of increasing importance. More and more nations of the world are recognizing the fact that this planet's resources are finite.

The population of Florida is growing rapidly; the State's water supply is not. Therefore, water conservation is critical.

Sanibel and Captiva Islands drinking water is drawn from the Suwannee Aquifer. The water is pumped from a series of wells to our Reverse Osmosis (R.O.) Water Treatment Plant located at 3651 Sanibel-Captiva Road. It is brackish water that has a moderate salt content. The salt content of the raw water is the primary reason that R.O. is used as Island Water Association's treatment technology. Check with IWA for watering restrictions.

Effluent, reuse, and non-potable refer to the same quality of partially treated water. Its appearance is not different from tap water. It is not fit for drinking purposes because it is not fully sanitized. Effluent water from Island treatment stations is currently being used by Island golf courses and properties along the effluent transmission lines.

Install irrigation devices that are the most water efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of efficient devices. Sprinklers work best in turf areas. Turf requires no more than one-inch of water each week, and shrubs even less. Less water makes the root system go deeper looking for water – making the root system more durable. Sprinkler heads should be checked regularly for clogs, direction of spray, and head damage. In bedded areas of trees, shrubs and/or ground covers, a bubbler or drip system is more efficient. Irrigation timers should be adjusted as temperatures and rainfall fluctuate. Florida law requires that sensors be on irrigation systems. A sensor assures that your system doesn't irrigate when it is raining.

A sensor called a "Mini-Clic" can be added to older irrigation systems. It is available at the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) Native-Plant Nursery located at 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road (mile marker one), 472-2329 or from the Island Water Association, 3651 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, 472-1502.

Participation in the Mobile Irrigation Laboratory Evaluation Program is encouraged. This free program is operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (995-5678). Field observations are made to determine the uniformity and efficiency of the irrigation system and a written report makes recommendations to enhance the landscape and conserve water. Call to schedule an appointment.

Note: Homes with wells must also comply with restrictions for water use.

#### **Water Wise Tips (South Florida Water Management District):**

- Native plants, once established, require less water than non-natives
- Water only when needed (grass blades will fold up when they are under water stress; new growth on other plants will droop when water is needed.)

- Use mulch to retain moisture in the soil and control weeds that compete with plants for water.
- Operate automatic dishwashers and washing machines when they are fully loaded or set the level for the size load you are washing.
- Check your water meter reading to make sure your home is leak free.
- Replace your shower head with an ultra-low-flow version.
- Retrofit all household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
- Turn the tap off as you brush your teeth or shave.

## B. Recycling

The City of Sanibel Recycling program provides green plastic bins to homeowners for weekly pick up at residences. Aluminum cans, plastics numbered 1-7 (on bottom of container within recycle symbol), tin, newspapers, magazines, junk mail, brown paper shopping bags, phone books and light cardboard are accepted. Styrofoam is not accepted. Certain supermarkets will recycle Styrofoam and plastic shopping bags.

Recyclable materials are also accepted at the City of Sanibel's Recycling Center located opposite the Sanibel Library on Dunlop Road. Several local organizations, such as Noah's Ark or GoodWill, recycle wearable used clothing, and household articles. Used automotive oil, transmission fluid, auto/boat batteries may be dropped off at the Sanibel Shell station at 2435 Periwinkle.

Alkaline batteries purchased after 1993 are non-hazardous and should be thrown into your normal garbage. Ni-Cd, lithium, buttoncell, pre-1993 alkaline batteries, computer and camcorder batteries should be placed in a clear plastic bag and placed beside your recycling bin on waste pick-up day or call the Division of Solid Waste, 338-3302, for location and dates of household hazardous waste drop off sites in Lee County.

Many condominium associations operate recycling programs. If you are a member of a condominium association, please contact your board for more information on recycling.

## C. Hazardous Waste Disposal

**(NEW INFORMATION ON  
HAZARDOUS WASTE  
DISPOSAL TO BE INSERTED  
HERE)**

## **VII. Hurricane Preparedness**

The City of Sanibel and Lee County work with the National Weather Service and National Hurricane Center to monitor storm and flood threats, and advise the community accordingly over local radio and television stations. For Sanibel specific emergencies or notices, residents can access the City's website at [www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com), call the City's Hurricane Hotline at 800-933-6093, tune into WDRR 98.5 FM radio, or any local cable television station.

The Sanibel Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) uses a system of "alert radios" to inform people about storm advisories, evacuation news, weather advisories, and other information from City Hall. These radios provide weather-related data for our local population. The radios operate on AC or battery power, and are available to the public through the Sanibel Police Department for a fee.

As a Barrier Island with the average elevation of 4 feet above sea level, it may be necessary to evacuate the Island to protect public safety. After an evacuation, it is the City's goal to return residents to their homes and property and business owners to their property as soon as safely possible. Hurricane passes maximize security measures while providing authorized persons access to their property. A valid driver's license with a proper Sanibel or Captiva address and/or Sanibel Hurricane Pass will allow access back onto the Island following an evacuation. However, a driver's license alone may cause delay. For the most expedient return for Sanibel residents, property owners and those with commercial interests are advised to obtain hurricane passes. Additionally, the new hurricane pass program includes a new system of nine zones. These zones will be printed on your hurricane pass and rear view mirror hanger to better track where people should be and to allow for phased re-entry, if warranted. Limited access at the time of return could be delayed due to any ongoing response and recovery efforts on Sanibel and Captiva.

**(NEW INFORMATION ON  
REVERSE 9-1-1 TO BE  
INSERTED HERE)**

## Questions and Answers (Q & A)

**Q. What is a Native Plant?**

A. A native plant is a plant deemed to be native by the City of Sanibel as per the list of horticulturally available native plants. Typically these plants have existed on Sanibel for the last one to two hundred years, before other species were brought here on purpose for farming or landscaping or arrived here by some accident.

**Q. When must I obtain a vegetation permit to remove a native tree or native shrub?**

A. If a native tree's trunk is **either** 2 inches or greater in diameter at a point two feet up from the ground **or** the tree is 6 feet or more in total height you must obtain a permit.

Similarly, if a native shrub is equal to or greater than 2 feet in height you must obtain a permit.

**Q. Where do I obtain a Vegetation Permit?**

A. The Planning Department at City Hall.

**Q. Are there fees for a vegetation permit?**

A. There are no fees for a permit to move or remove a native plant from an existing property. There are fees for altering mangroves, for altering vegetation forward of the 1974 Coastal Construction Control Line, and for mechanical alteration of vegetation.

**Q. What should I do if I have vegetation questions or need help deciding whether I need a permit?**

A. Call the Natural Resources Department at the City of Sanibel at 472-3700. Someone will be glad to help you regarding any vegetation matter.

**Q. Native plants are important for what reasons?**

A. They provide food and habitat for wildlife. They need little water after they are established. They grow well in the extremes of warm temperatures. They need no fertilizer and are resistant to pests. Most of the time they are maintenance free.

**Q. Where will I find a listing of Native Plants?**

A. At the City's website at [www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com), the Sanibel Planning Department or the SCCF Native Plant Nursery.

**Q. What is the 75 percent/25 percent rule?**

A. Requiring homeowners to have only native plants on their property would maximize the amount of habitat available for wildlife, but would be overly restrictive. There are beautiful non-invasive non-native plants that can grow well on Sanibel Island. The City of Sanibel, with input from its residents, chose to require that a minimum of 75 percent of plants on a property be native, allowing the other 25 percent to be native or non-invasive non-natives or a combination of the two.

**Q. What is a Vegetation Plan?**

A. A Vegetation Plan describes all native plants within the area to be disturbed and must include:

1. An inventory and the location of all native vegetation (subject to certain size and height considerations) within the area to be impacted by construction.
2. A plan for relocation and survival of native vegetation in the area to be cleared for construction.

Native vegetation outside the area to be disturbed must be left in place.

**Q. What are the regulations regarding the amount of sod areas I may have?**

A. The sodded area allowed varies with the eco-zone in which the property is located. The Building and Planning Departments regulates this permitted area under a separate ordinance at the time of construction.

The Vegetation Committee strongly encourages a natural look using native plants and grasses with little or no sod.

**Q. Am I required to landscape my property after my house is constructed?**

A. No. You are not required to landscape your property. However, you must replace those plants specified in your vegetation permit and the portion landscaped must be in the 75/25 ratio. If you later decide to do more extensive landscaping, the 75/25 percent native/non-native rule must be followed.

**Q. May I cover my yard with stone?**

A. You may not cover your yard entirely with stone. This practice is no longer allowed. However, some percentage of stone may be used. Check with the Building Department for the percent allowed for your property.

**Q. Where do you purchase native plants?**

A. From a native plant nursery such as the SCCF Native Plant Nursery is located at 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road (mile marker one.) The Association of Florida Native Nurseries at (877)352-2366 provides information for other native plant nurseries throughout the State. Local nurseries that sell exotics may also sell native plants.



Q. **What are the invasive-non-native plants currently prohibited by the City of Sanibel?**

A. Brazilian pepper, lead tree, Java plum, air potato, earleaf acacia, exotic inkberry (*Scaevola frutescens*), melaleuca, snake plant (*Sansevieria hyacinthoides*). A free brochure called *Alien Invasion* with photographs is available at City Hall and the SCCF Native-Plant Nursery.

Q. **What are examples of "undesirable" invasive non-native plants?**

A. Some of the undesirables we urge you not to plant are: carrotwood, Cuban laurel, Mexican petunia, mahoe (seaside hibiscus), schefflera, wandering jew and wedelia, .

Q. **Is a naturalized plant a native plant?**

A. No. A naturalized plant is a non-native plant that has escaped into the wild. That is, it is growing and reproducing on its own outside of cultivation, without human assistance. The term is often misinterpreted to suggest that a non-native plant has "become native" in its new habitat.

Q. **Is a coconut palm a native plant?**

A. Although coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*) are not native to Florida, they are considered a neutral species - they are not counted in your plant inventory as either native or non-native.

Q. **Is a Sabal (Cabbage) Palm protected?**

A. For the Sabal or Cabbage palm, the determining factor is the height of the crown, which is measured from the ground to the point where the stem of new fronds exit the trunk. If this height is 6 feet or more, the Sabal palm is protected.

Q. **Does the property owner have to remove Australian pines?**

A. Australian pines are considered invasive, non-native plants, and may not be sold, planted, or transplanted within the State of Florida at any time. Their removal at the time of development is strongly encouraged, but is not required by City Ordinance.

Q. **How much may I trim mature native vegetation?**

A. No more than 25% of the leaf area of a native tree or shrub may be trimmed in any one year.

Q. **May I remove (eliminate from my property) a non-native tree or shrub?**

A. Any non-native tree or shrub may be removed from developed property by the homeowner, at any time, without a permit. Clearing of non-natives from vacant property does require a permit.



Q. **May I move a native plant to another property without a permit?**

A. No. A permit from the City of Sanibel must be obtained first.

Q. **A native plant on my property died. May I remove it without a permit?**

A. No. Most likely you will be allowed to remove a dead plant, but once a plant is removed, it is difficult to tell if the plant died before or after it was removed. To protect yourself from possible violation and forthcoming mitigation, you should call the Natural Resources Department about applying for a permit.

Q. **If there is a storm (or other event not of my doing) and one or more native plants on my property are badly damaged or destroyed, must I get a permit to remove them? Must I replace them?**

A. The City hopes that the homeowner will do what he can to save vegetation damaged by storms by righting trees and replacing what is lost, but replacement is not required. However, a permit will be required to remove the plants.

Q. **What should I inquire of a landscape contractor whom I hire to do work on my property?**

A. It is very important that the contractor or landscaper fulfill two requirements. You should ask first if the contractor has an occupational license from the City of Sanibel. Second, the contractor should have a Vegetation Competency Card. This means that the contractor has passed a test given by the Vegetation Committee covering City vegetation standards, identification of native plants, and of prohibited invasives. If the contractor does nothing but mowing and edging a Vegetation Competency Card is not necessary.

Q. **What department issues Vegetation Competency Cards?**

A. City of Sanibel Building Department. Personnel in this office can also tell you when the next Competency test will be offered. Homeowners may also call this Department to find out if a specific landscaping contractor has a Vegetation Competency Card.

Q. **How long is a Vegetation Competency Card valid?**

A. A Competency Card must be renewed every year by October 1. Retesting is required every 5 years.

Q. **There is still considerable Brazilian pepper in my neighborhood. When will the property owners have to remove it?**

A. The City Department of Natural Resources is engaged in a systematic program for the eradication of pepper from Sanibel. This task is so large and time consuming that the City concentrates on only one area at a time. To find out when the property owners

in your neighborhood will be required to remove pepper, and what the procedure is, call the Department of Natural Resources at 472-3700.

**Q. May I clear cattails from the wetland on my property?**

A. Hand removal of cattails is permitted. Chemical herbicides for aquatic areas may only be applied by persons qualified by the State of Florida. Such action would also require a permit.

**Q. Are green buttonwoods considered mangroves?**

A. They are not considered mangroves, though they do grow in wet areas. They are subject to all rules regarding native plants.

**Q. Is there poison ivy on Sanibel?**

A. Yes, it grows beautifully here. Also, some people develop a similar rash from Brazilian pepper.

**Q. I have a strangler fig tree that is growing close to my house. May I remove it?**

A. Strangler figs may be and often are root pruned. You may also prune up to 25 percent of the leaf area per year. This may solve the problem. If the roots are threatening your foundation, however, you will be permitted to move or remove it. A Vegetation Permit is required.

**Q. What if there are gopher tortoise burrows on property that I am about to build on?**

A. Tortoises may only be relocated on-site. If the burrow/s are active, the Department of Natural Resources will require you to relocate the tortoise to an area of your lot that will not be disturbed. This requires a State permit and an environmental consultant. Some portion of the property must be enhanced for gopher tortoise habitat, by planting plants gopher tortoises feed on such as gopher apple, ground cherry, golden creeper and prickly pear cactus. You must plant at least three species of forage plants and at least 30 plants per tortoise.

**Q. How are Sanibel's Vegetation Ordinances enforced?**

A. Concerned residents call City Hall when they see an action that appears contrary to Sanibel's environmental standards. A City staff member or member of the Vegetation Committee may observe a violation. A Department of Natural Resources staff member or one of the City Code enforcement officers will then check on the situation.

**Q. What penalties may be assessed?**

A. The City can issue an immediate "stop work" order that stands until the deficiency has

been corrected. The City can also withhold the issue of a Development Permit, causing a delay in the start of a project, or withhold the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy, thus delaying the owner's moving in. Fines can be imposed, the amount varying with the nature of the violation. Mitigation may also be required.

**Q. What is mitigation?**

A. Mitigation could mean planting numerous small native trees on the property where a large native tree has been removed. Property owners may in some cases be required to provide and install large numbers of native plants on another property.

**Q. What recourse does a property owner have if his application for a Vegetation Permit is denied?**

A. Enforcement of vegetation standards is exclusively the purview of the City Manager or his/her designee. The applicant may ask for a review of the decision from the Planning Commission, 1) which may uphold the decision, 2) remand the application for further consideration, or 3) reverse or modify the City Manager's determination.

## VIII. Acknowledgements, Phone Numbers, Websites, References and Organizations

### Sanibel Land Development Code Sections:

- 1 Florida Administrative Code 68B – 26.003 (1) (b), Resolution 95-06
- 2 Sanibel Code Section 74-182
- 3 Sanibel Code Section 122-146
- 4 Sanibel Code Section 38 and Florida Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act of 1995, Florida Statute 403.92-409-9333.
- 5 Sanibel Code Section 2-156:158
- 6 Sanibel Code Section 14
- 7 Sanibel Code Section 10-9
- 8 Sanibel Code Section 10-8
- 9 Sanibel Code Section 10-7
- 10 Sanibel Code Section 10-67
- 11 Sanibel Code Section 10-6

### Phone numbers (*area code 239*)

#### City of Sanibel

Administrative Offices	472-3700	Email: <a href="mailto:san.admin@mysanibel.com">san.admin@mysanibel.com</a>
Planning Department	472-4136	Email: <a href="mailto:san.plan@mysanibel.com">san.plan@mysanibel.com</a>
Natural Resources Department	472-3700	Email: <a href="mailto:san.dnr@mysanibel.com">san.dnr@mysanibel.com</a>
Building Department	472-4555	Email: <a href="mailto:san.bld@mysanibel.com">san.bld@mysanibel.com</a>
Utilities/Sewer Department	472-1008	Email: <a href="mailto:san.ut@mysanibel.com">san.ut@mysanibel.com</a>
Police Department	472-3111	Email: <a href="mailto:san.pd@mysanibel.com">san.pd@mysanibel.com</a>
Public Works	472-6397	Email <a href="mailto:san.pw@mysanibel.com">san.pw@mysanibel.com</a>
Sanibel Hurricane Hotline	1-800-933-6093	

#### Lee County

County Cooperative Extension Service	461-7500
Florida Recycling Services, Inc.	332-8500
Division of Solid Waste	338-3302
USDA Service Center for Ft. Myers	995-5678

## Other Organizations Important to Environmental Preservation

Sanibel/Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF)	472-2329	www.sccf.org
SCCF Native Plant Nursery	472-1932	
J.N. "Ding" Darling U.S. National Wildlife Refuge	472-1100	www.dingdarling.fws.gov
CROW (Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife)	472-3644	www.crowclinic.org

## Water

Island Water Association	472-1502	www.islandwater.com
South Florida Water Management District	338-2929	www.sfwmd.gov

## Web sites

City of Sanibel (all departments)	<a href="http://www.mysanibel.com">www.mysanibel.com</a>
Gopher Tortoise Council	<a href="http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org">www.gophertortoisecouncil.org</a>
Lee County (click on departments and divisions)	<a href="http://www.lee-county.com">www.lee-county.com</a>
USF Institute of Systematic Botany	<a href="http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu">www.plantatlas.usf.edu</a>

## References

Information Package for the Vegetation Contractors Certification of Competency  
- available at City of Sanibel Building Department

<i>National Audobon Society Field Guide to Florida</i>	Peter Alden
<i>A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants</i>	Rufino Osorio
<i>Native Florida Plants</i>	Robert G. Haehle, Joan Blackwell
<i>Growing Native</i>	Richard W. Workman
<i>Guide to Florida Wildflowers</i>	Walter Kingsley Taylor
<i>Florida Wild Flowers and Roadside Plants</i>	C. Ritchie Bell and Bryan J. Taylor
<i>Seashore Plants of South Florida and the Caribbean</i>	David W. Nellis
<i>The Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida</i>	Gil Nelson
<i>The Trees of Florida</i>	Gil Nelson
<i>National Audobon Society Field Guide to Florida.</i>	Peter Alden
<i>Shorebirds; an Identification Guide.</i>	Peter Hayman, John Marchant,

*Beginner's Guide to Shorebirds.*

*Collectible Florida Shells.*

*Florida's Birds, a Handbook and Reference.*

*Field Guide To Bird Life and Behavior.*

*Field Guide To Birds; Eastern Region.*

*Butterflies of Florida Field Guide.*

*Florida Butterfly Gardening.*

*Florida's Snakes.*

*Florida's Fabulous Reptiles and Amphibians.*

*Be Careful in Florida; Know these Poisonous  
Snakes, Insects, Plants.*

*Guide to Florida's Poisonous Snakes.*

*The Loggerhead Turtle in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico  
Sanibel Island.*

Tony Prater

Donald and Lillian Stokes

R. Tucker Abbott

Herbert W. Kale, David S. Maehr

David A. S. Sibley

Donald and Lillian Stokes

Janet C. Daniels

Marc C. Minno

Richard D. Bartlett

Pete Carmichael, Winston Williams

Francis Wyly Hall

Robert Anderson

Charles LeBuff

Lynn Stone

## **Organizations**

Weeds and Seeds Study Group, (SCCF)

[www.sccf.org](http://www.sccf.org)

Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC)

[www.fleppc.org](http://www.fleppc.org)

Florida Native Plant Society

[www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)

Association of Florida Native Nurseries

[www.afnn.org](http://www.afnn.org)

Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum

[www.shellmuseum.org](http://www.shellmuseum.org)

International Osprey Foundation

[www.ospreys.com](http://www.ospreys.com)

Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society

[www.sancapaudubon.org](http://www.sancapaudubon.org)

Sea Turtle Program (SCCF)

[www.sccf.org](http://www.sccf.org)

## **City of Sanibel Committees**

### **A. Planning Commission**

The broad objectives of the creation of the Planning Commission are to:

- a) further the welfare of the citizens of the City by helping to promote a better, more helpful, convenient, efficient, healthful, safe and attractive community environment and
- b) insure that the unique and natural characteristics of the Island are preserved.

This Commission was established in 1975.

### **B. Historical Preservation Committee**

The charge of this Committee is to:

- a) prepare a list of historic places with resumés for the consideration of the City Council, and if approved, thereafter designate them as historically valuable.
- b) acquire information from state and federal agencies, concerning legal protection of these historic sites and buildings, and to coordinate the Committee's activities with these agencies.
- c) contact the owners of such properties, advise them of the designation and seek their cooperation.
- d) explore ways in which funds might be obtained (such as state or federal grants, public subscription, etc.) to buy or restore historic properties.
- e) maintain a list of historic places with resumés for the consideration of Council and if approved, thereafter designate them as historically valuable.
- f) perform duties imposed on the Committee under the historic preservation provisions of the Land Development Code.
- g) supervise the operation of the Island Historical Museum, and the acquisition, display and de-accession of items within.

The Historical Preservation Committee was established in 1975.

### **C. Marine Advisory Committee**

The charge of this Committee is to:

- a) consider all matters referred to it by City Council concerning fishing and boating in and around the City of Sanibel.
- b) consider such matters on its own initiative as it deems advisable.

- c) render to the City Council such advice and recommendations as it seems fitting and proper to ensure the safe and healthful use, enjoyment, preservation and conservation of the City's water-related environment for fishing and boating activities.

The Marine Advisory Committee was established in 1985.

#### D. Parks and Recreation Committee

The charge of this Committee is to:

- a) help interpret the parks and recreational needs and desires of the community on both short and long term basis.
- b) study and evaluate the existing programs in the community.
- c) act as a clearing agency for suggestions.
- d) advise City Council regarding local traditions and recreational usage patterns and offer guidance when departures from these norms are contemplated.
- e) stimulate community members to participate in various programs by showing the values to be derived from their participation.

The Parks and Recreation Committee was established in 2001.

#### E. Vegetation Committee

The charge of this Committee is as follows:

- a) advise the City Council and the Planning Commission about sound ecological management of vegetative resources in the city and may review and comment about proposed development.
- b) collect, analyze and disseminate information on basic ecological principles as they relate to island vegetation.
- c) make available to the best of its ability expert technical assistance for any person on the Island who desires advice concerning clearing or landscaping for a development activity. Such assistance shall include, but not be limited to, the identification of individual specimens of vegetation that should be preserved, advice on arrangements for the transplanting of individual specimens to other parcels on the Island, and the location of appropriate native species for landscaping.

The Vegetation Committee was established in 1976.



## F. Wildlife Committee

The charge of this Committee is as follows:

It shall study and advise City Council on Council's request, or when the Committee believes such study and advice is warranted on matters pertaining to:

- a) population trends of the various species of wildlife on Sanibel, changes in the population thereof, and causes of such changes;
- b) public and private land uses, policies, practices and activities which could adversely affect the wildlife of the City;
- c) plans and policy for the protection, preservation and possible reintroduction of Island wildlife;
- d) possible danger to the public posed by any species of Island wildlife, the reasons therefore and proposals for alleviating such dangers;
- e) public information and educational programs which help to protect and preserve Island wildlife and to increase public awareness of possible dangers to wildlife from wildlife.

The Wildlife Committee was established in 1984.

## G. Contractor Licensing Board

The charge of this Board is as follows:

- a) establishing a system for licensing, registration and regulation of construction contractors;
- b) providing for examination of contractor licensing applicants;
- c) setting forth a procedure to obtain a contractor's license;
- d) providing for the status of licenses;
- e) providing for reciprocity with other contractors licensing jurisdictions;
- f) providing for restrictions, prohibited activities, and contractor discipline;
- g) providing for additional remedies;
- h) setting forth types and categories of contractors licenses;
- i) providing for emergency special license provisions;
- j) providing for the establishment of licenses and related fees, and changes to such fees, by resolution.

The Contractor Licensing Board was established in 2004.

From time to time ad hoc committees are set up to advise Council on specific issues.