

## *Water Restrictions*

### *Update:*

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division in late May and again in mid-August elected not to intensify Georgia's water restrictions, which for most Metro-Atlanta counties consists of an odd-even day, 10PM to 10AM watering time-frame. There are certain local exceptions to these, but the EPD decided that these would continue to work for the state as a whole for the time being. Several smaller municipalities, such as Canton and Roswell, have implemented more stringent restrictions, even an all out ban due to serious threats to the water supply. Griffin is down to under a 30 day water supply. The drought now continues into its fifth year. As of this writing, we are approximately 8 inches of rainfall below normal for 2002 alone. This deficit is down from over 12 inches, thanks to the remnants of Tropical Storm Hanna, which has brought plantlife-saving rain to Georgia! Timing and frequency of rainfall earlier in the year gave Atlanta its first really beautiful Spring show in 4 years.

## **Environmental Update**

— Rick Barnes

### *Monarch Death – Global Warning?*

Last February the ground around Sierra Chincua Sanctuary, Mexico, looked as though a massacre had taken place – but this time the victims were millions of Monarch Butterflies. A severe cold snap west of Mexico City is believed to have killed an estimated 273 million Monarchs, leaving them 8 inches deep on the ground in some places!

The culprit, however, was not the cold. Rather, the depletion of forest in the area has effectively removed any protection the insects would have had from the cold. Furthermore, illegal logging has caused most of that depletion.

While this devastating freeze will not drive the species to extinction, it does not bode well for the future of the incredible Monarch Migration to this small area of Mexico, and serves as warning to everyone as to what can happen as a result of environmental abuse. Each year, in a little understood phenomenon of nature, millions of Monarch butterflies migrate from eastern North America to this relatively confined forest area. No one is sure of why, and even more mysterious is the fact that several generations of butterflies occur between those that fly away from this area and those that return.

(Thanks to Jean Yerks and National Geographic.com for information relative to this article.)

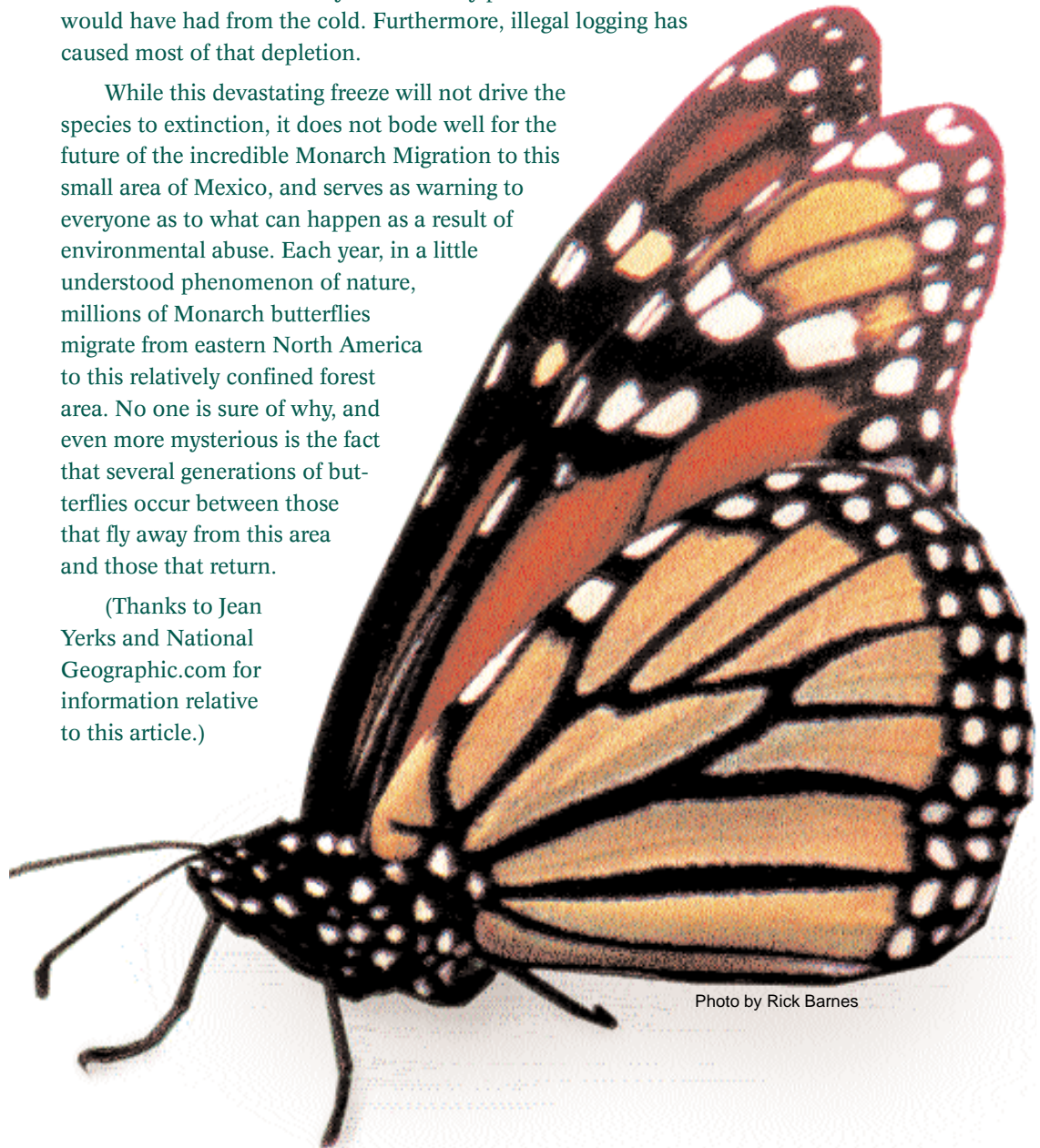


Photo by Rick Barnes

# 2000 Paces Ferry

—Allen Clemons

2000 Paces Ferry is an upscale Cluster Home Community located just minutes from downtown Atlanta. Currently, there are over 50 residences completed, each representing its own set of unique challenges. Each home has its own distinctive landscape style. Some homes are designed to be maintained with a very formal appearance, while others take on a natural flowing look. Each month the Nature Scapes' Account Manager, James Wages, performs a site evaluation with Dennis Hoffman, who represents both Community Management Associates and the Homeowner's Association. This monthly process assures a cooperative effort to understand and carry out the varying needs of each resident.

Nature Scapes became involved with this project in the early stages of its development, and has steadfastly worked to increase the property values and enhance the outdoor living environment. One such way is through seasonal installations of annual color, using in excess of 1,000 plants per rotation. The plants are selected each season to create a very bright, vibrant, and inviting entryway. Many of the residents continue this process by coordinating the use of color in their own gardens. It is this sense of community that makes Nature Scapes very proud to be associated with 2000 Paces Ferry.



# Xeriscaping Revisited — Now More Than Ever!

—Pamela Lasota

Little did I know when I first presented this article in Cultivated News four years ago that Georgia would have slid so deeply into its present drought. Unrestricted growth in our region has put so much stress on our water supply that water has come to be the focus of much attention from both the media and the general population.

The seven principles of Xeriscaping, when applied completely, can cut water consumption in the landscape by as much as 50 percent! The beauty of this approach to water-wise landscaping is that you do not have to start over to achieve better water efficiency – often minor modifications in layout, soil structure, plant selection, and ongoing maintenance practices will yield a significant improvement. See how many of the following seven principles of Xeriscaping could effectively be applied to your property:

**STEP 1: PLANNING AND DESIGN** – There are many factors to consider in this part of the process. Creating shade areas and natural areas; shade areas lose less moisture, while natural areas are less densely planted. Watch sun exposure during different times of the day to determine where the driest areas are for proper plant selection. Determine water use zones: highly-visible areas, where regular watering would be required; moderate water areas, where watering is done only on an as needed basis; and low water areas, where plants live on natural rainfall.

**STEP 2: SOIL ANALYSIS** -- Take soil samples to the county Extension office to have them tested. The Extension

agent will give recommendations on soil amendments or fertilizers based on the analysis.

**STEP 3: PLANT SELECTION** – Plants should be selected for the site and not necessarily for the fact that they are drought tolerant. Shady, wet areas call for a much different plant than a dry, sunny location. Choose the plants for the location; consider its maximum growth, growth habit, texture and growth rate. **ALL NEWLY PLANTED PLANT MATERIAL WILL NEED TO BE WATERED UNTIL IT IS ESTABLISHED WHETHER IT IS DROUGHT TOLERANT OR NOT! THIS PERIOD GENERALLY LASTS A MINIMUM OF 8-10 WEEKS, WITH VIGILANCE TO CURRENT RAINFALL PATTERNS THEREAFTER.** A little research on a plant's cultural requirements will go a long way in Xeriscaping.

**STEP 4: LIMITING TURF AREAS** – Some turf grasses, such as Tifway Bermuda, are extremely drought tolerant and continue to look great with as little as two inches of water per month. Often grasses that are not watered will wilt or turn a gray or brown color until watered again. Recovery from such dry conditions is often good if the lawn is well established. Turf should be utilized in large, open areas for a particular purpose so that it can be properly maintained and have enough sun to grow well. Avoid using turf in small, narrow areas that are difficult to irrigate and mow.

(continued on back cover)

# GOOD Migrations

Part Two in a 4-part series on the selection of plants from their native habitats for use as ornamentals

—Rick Barnes

Last Summer we had the privilege of traveling to Switzerland. The trip included a couple of forays into the Alps of northern Italy, and one of the stops was Isola Bella, a beautiful island castle and garden on Lake Maggiore. Exploring the gardens, I was astounded to spot our native Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and another plant native to Georgia that many of us love to hate, the American Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)!

These plants were to the gardeners of Europe what the plants I spoke of in Part One of this series are to us – exotic species for the garden from a distant, exotic land. Indeed, in the 1700's and 1800's, plant explorers seeking exotic new plants scoured the United States, then a wild frontier, in search of them. Those native American trees I saw at Isola Bella were very likely propagated from stock introduced in England by such explorers as William Bartram, who thoroughly explored the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida from 1773 to 1778.

The plants Bartram described were exotic to his readers. He was the son of John Bartram, who discovered *Franklinia altamaha*, a plant named for Benjamin Franklin and the river along which he found the plant, the Altamaha River of south-central Georgia. This plant is rare indeed, not being seen in the wild since about 1790. Since then, it has been asexually propagated by nurserymen as an ornamental and is therefore considered a genetically dead species. Many, many species described by William Bartram wound up gracing the gardens of England.

In the past 10 –15 years, there has been a resurgence in interest in native American plant species for the garden.

The movement toward wide spread use of natives is a great thing, but it may be occurring for all the wrong reasons. Speaking with George Sanko, head of the Georgia Perimeter College Native Plant Botanical Garden, I was given a working example. When George moved into his new home a few years back, he removed all of the cultivated plants, installing native plants instead. “All the native plants died, and I wound up planting the cultivated crap back again!” This points to the common misconception about natives: that because they are native, they can survive anywhere. Not so! Native plants must be carefully sited, often even more so than many exotic species. When native plants are treated this way, they can yield great results in the garden, give a unique appeal, and withstand any detrimental curve ball that Mother Nature can throw.

Your first attempt at the use of a native plant might be a new Dogwood or Redbud tree in your yard. As you learn more and more about them, you will find a whole world of great garden plants that come from right in the neighborhood! Native Azaleas, other ornamental shrubs, trees and perennials too numerous to mention in this short article can provide color, hardiness, and interest to the garden that will rival that provided by species from far away or even cultivated varieties, or cultivars. A great place to see the potential for native plants in your garden is to visit the Native Plant Botanical Garden at Georgia Perimeter College, Decatur Campus. When considering plants for your garden – don't forget the natives!

Next time, Good Migrations will take you into the world of the cultivar, the cross-pollinator, and the gene splice!

## Make an Investment in Your Street

—Lee Padgett

Seasonal color is one of the most important aspects of a property's curb appeal and is usually the first thing someone notices about a property. But a quality, successful color program is more than just planting flowers in the ground.

One of the most important parts of a good program is quality installation including proper bed preparation, correct planting procedures, and adherence to the design layout. An effective design utilizes complimentary, as well as contrasting color schemes and a variety of textures and heights.

After the installation is completed, to ensure the flowers reach their full potential, a comprehensive, detailed maintenance program must be used. Maintenance includes weeding the beds, pruning, periodic fertilization, touch-up of mulch, and scouting for insects and disease. Proper design, installation, and maintenance are essential to making dramatic,

attractive displays of color.

Well installed and well maintained landscaping and seasonal color will increase the value of commercial and residential properties over time, and create effective curb appeal and community pride from owners and residents. As part of our menu of quality services, Nature Scapes is proud to offer comprehensive seasonal color programs that your property will be proud of. Contact us today to begin plans for exciting seasonal color!

*Lee Padgett joined Nature Scapes in Spring 2002 as the Seasonal Color Manager. He has over 12 years experience in commercial and residential landscape with a specialty in seasonal color for the past 9 years. He looks forward to helping you brighten and beautify your property with the use of effective color displays.*

## W H O W E A R E

*Cultivated News* is published two times a year by Nature Scapes, Inc., for over fifteen years a provider of landscaping, maintenance, irrigation and floriculture services to the metro Atlanta area.

Nature Scapes, Inc. is a charter member of GGIA — Georgia Green Industry Association, MALTA — Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association, GAI — Georgia Irrigation Association, and CAI — Community Associations Institute. We also belong to the Southern Nurseryman's Association.

Nature Scapes, Inc. operates a drug-free workplace as certified by the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

If you have any topics or questions you would like to see discussed or elaborated on in a future issue of the newsletter, please call and let us know.

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**STEP 5: EFFICIENT IRRIGATION** – An irrigation system should distribute water evenly; avoid overspray on streets, sidewalks or buildings; and be set at the appropriate watering times to comply with current restrictions. The application rate should be set so that proper penetration is achieved without runoff. Drip irrigation systems use 30 to 50% less water, with less evaporation. Hand watering is a good way of watering individual plants showing stress; be sure to use a water breaker to avoid runoff.

**STEP 6: MULCHING** – Mulching is the best way to retain moisture in the soil by reducing evaporation and helping to prevent rapid runoff during watering periods. Natural areas of organic mulch need no water and are very low maintenance. Apply 3" of mulch around plants for maximum benefit. The best mulches are organic, such as, pine straw, shredded hardwood, pine bark or composted material.

**STEP 7: APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE** – Use less fertilizer or fertilize less frequently to discourage new growth; use a slow-release fertilizer; avoid shearing plants. Mow turf at the appropriate heights. A good rule is to take off no more than one-third of the leaf at each mowing. Aerating also improves water penetration into soil. Keep weeds down so that they do not compete with plants for water.

All of the landscape renovation work recommended by Nature Scapes is undergirded by the Seven Principles of Xeriscaping. Our entire staff is ready to help you apply these principles to *your property* for improved water efficiency, better aesthetics, and increased property values. Call us today and find out how we can help you *Xeriscape* – now more than ever!



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