

FNPS 1991 Landscape Awards

by William Bissett
Landscape Awards Chairman

The FNPS Landscape Enhancement Awards recognize individuals or groups who have demonstrated preservation and/or reintroduction of native plants into the landscape. The judges hold both approaches with equal regard, for, while preservation may be more ecologically important, any attempt at restoration of a disturbed natural landscape is complex and difficult. The 1991 entries are once again good examples of preservation and restoration on both residential and commercial levels.

But never before have we had an entry that dealt with preservation, restoration, and maintenance of a system in such complexity and with such scope of site dynamics and techniques, macro and micro, as this year's overall winner.

Pine Ridge Preserve, the residence of Terry and Barbara Glancy in Homestead, is fifteen acres of rock ridge pineland, an ecosystem once common in south Florida, but now reduced to less than five percent of its original acreage.

When the Glancys purchased the property in 1978, it was in such a disturbed state that, except for the Dade County Slash Pine canopy, it did not resemble a rock ridge pineland. Fifty-year-old Brazilian pepper dominated the understory, and where the previous owner had penned cattle was a solid stand of *Albizia* (mimosa). The site was covered with fifty years of built-up ground litter and the weeds and exotic plant intrusion that come with fire deprivation.

The Glancys, with the help of the Florida Division of Forestry and Geoff Babb of The Nature Conservancy, embarked on a program of controlled burns and herbicide treatment. Over ten years, the rock ridge pineland has been restored, including the return of rare, endangered, and endemic species that were either missing, repressed, or dormant when the property was purchased.

Another remarkable part of this entry is the handling of the new home construction on site. One of the goals was

to have the pineland vegetation wash right up, fire and all, to the walls of the new house. With the help of George Gann-Matzen of Eco-Horizons, the Glancys were able to reconstruct the pineland ecosystem using excavated material from the site and limestone boulders from the perimeter of an adjacent grove. In this new tiered bed was planted a diverse list of nursery-grown and rescued rock ridge species. The once cleared cattle-pen area around the house is now treated as a simplified pineland and burned with a hand-held torch during controlled burns.

The Glancys wrote:

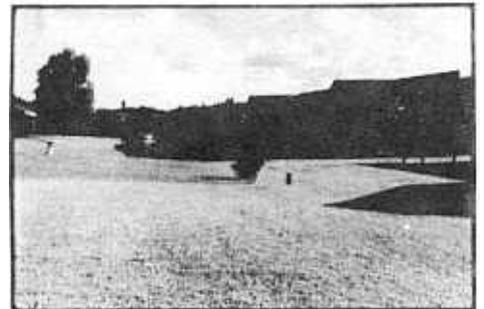
"We hauled individual rocks to their proper placement and burned the weeds out of the crevices after washing away eighty years of accumulated dirt and litter. Within a couple of months, pineland species started to appear all over these rocks, including the federally endangered *Argythanmia blodgettii*. Just as we saw when we first started preserving the pineland preserve, if exotics and hardwood litter and dirt are removed and the correct light and environmental conditions are reestablished, dormant tubers, roots stocks, and even seeds that may have lain dormant for fifty years will start to reestablish themselves. It is our strong belief that, regardless of how degraded an ecosystem is, if the proper techniques and enough labor is used, that land can probably be reestablished."

A photograph of the Glancy's rock ridge pinelands restoration is on the cover of *The Palmetto*.

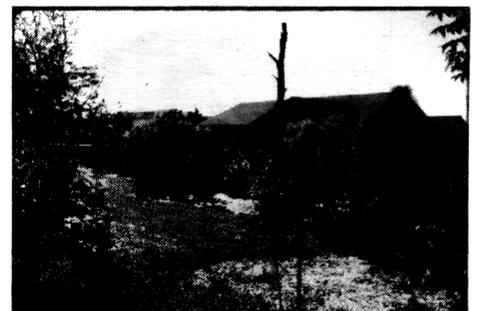
Residential Winners

First place in the residential category was a tie. The residence of Ray and Janice Miller in Boynton Beach, and the residence of David and Nell Pretzch in Winter Haven are almost identical in everything except the ecosystems being restored: same size property (subdivision lot), same time frame, same type of pre-owned and landscaped lot "characterized by a sparse composite of exotic ornamentals and vast expanses of turf", according to Miller.

Miller residence
looking out across back yard



Before



After

David Pretzch says, "I have spent countless hours on this property observing the vast array of insects, butterflies, and birds. My neighbors show more than a little curiosity, and I delight in showing them hummingbird moths, dayflowers in bloom, zebra butterflies and [its] eggs on pawpaw. If the guests

are lucky, the hummingbirds who visit during spring migration will be present."

Pretzch residence



Before



After

The home of Mr. and Mrs. William Radcliffe, Lake Placid, took second place residential. After looking for almost two years for undisturbed property, they found a virgin hammock on the edge of a lake, including a bog area that had been protected by the previous owner as a bird sanctuary. They planned and built a redwood house that fit into the woods with minimal disturbance. The Radcliffes call their residence "a hidden habitat, tranquility and Florida at its best."

Commercial Winners

The I.M.C. reclamation office in Fort Lonesome took first place in the commercial category. This was a newly renovated building in an old neglected landscape consisting of mostly bahia grass and dead exotic shrubs. A xeric community approximating sand scrub/sand hill/pine flatwoods was built on imported scrub sand.



I.M.C. Reclamation office

Second place was awarded to Post Fountains in Orlando, for its 60-acre apartment complex in flatwood and cypress dome land north of Orlando International Airport. Common retention ponds were planted to recreate wildlife habitat, and bass, turtles, ducks, herons, egrets, hawks, and raccoons have moved in.



Post Fountains retention pond



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