



# the greenplanet newsletter



Fall 2009

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## Joe's Corner

**Joe Chiellini**  
President/Owner  
813-299-8915  
[jchiellini@ameriscapeusa.com](mailto:jchiellini@ameriscapeusa.com)



Do you have a bucket list? For those of you who have not seen "The Bucket List" movie, do yourself a favor and go rent it. In short, it is the story of two gentlemen who are dying and have not done all the things in life they wanted to do. They create a list called the bucket list and begin to cross off things such as sky diving, race car driving, etc... You are probably asking where Joe is going with this "bucket list"??? About a month ago a very good friend of mine (Pep Prado) asked if I wanted to participate in a wrestling event for charity (WWE type of wrestling). Please understand this was a dream of mine 15 years ago and I never followed through, nor did I ever expect to this late in life. Let me tell all of you who think and know its fake, I found out first hand "IT STILL HURTS"!! The show date arrived and went off without a hitch and I had the rush of my life knowing that my two kids got to cheer for their daddy as I fulfilled a childhood dream. (My wife cheered as well but I think there was more laughing than cheering!)

I write about the "bucket list" this quarter because it seems each year is passing faster and faster. Although I consider myself very lucky to have a great friend help with my bucket list and a wife that is my biggest cheerleader, I still don't want to forget the importance of working and living each day to its fullest. My children are starting school now so I will make sure each summer is utilized to its maximum potential. By the way having a great family is one of my bucket list items. Maybe take some time and sit down and create a bucket list and don't be afraid to dream. Most of you who get this newsletter are working as hard as or harder than me and there is no reason we shouldn't have time to create memories. So, what are you waiting for??? Sit down and start your list...

*Joe*



## Citation Club on Palmer Ranch



**Left to right:**  
Doug, Ray, Rick, Elizabeth, Ryan & Lee.

JMG community "Citation Club on Palmer Ranch" announced as this month's winner for Property Of The Month. We have Lee Villarreal the Business Manager & his staff at Citation Club to thank for their continued participation and partnership with Ameriscape Services.

Ameriscape is very excited to have a great partnership with Lee and his staff. Lee's success as a manager is very evident through his dedication and he is always looking for ways to improve his community.

Are you interested in being Property Of The Month?  
Call Doug Mills at 813-789-3554 for details.

Ameriscape Services is proud to be associated with these fine organizations:



## Why Recycle?

There is a lot of talk about going green these days, how about saving some green.

Turf was developed and designed years ago to improve our environment in a variety of functional ways. Turf controls erosion of soil from wind and water, it covers areas that might otherwise be dusty and muddy, it reduces air and noise pollution, creates areas for entertainment, gathering places for family and friends, offer solitude, escape and relaxation or create a play area for kids. Many outdoor sports and recreational activities would not be safe without the use of turf because of its ability to cushion against injuries. As an added bonus, a quality lawn can increase property values and create curb appeal.

In an effort to maintain an attractive lawn we can sometimes harm the environment. The challenge is smart watering, mowing, fertilization and pest control.

Something we can all do and help the environment is recycle our lawns, as in recycle our grass clippings normally sent to the landfill in bags or in our trash cans. The concept is simple, logical and serves the common goal of natural resource conservation.

Grass clippings are a free source of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, essential elements our lawns require to be healthy. Grass clippings contain approx. 4% nitrogen, .5% phosphorus, 2% potassium and other essential plant nutrients in smaller amounts. There is no risk of burning the lawn which can happen with fertilizers applied when turf is wet. Recycling clippings instead of using a catcher reduces the amount of fertilizers used and saves money.

In the past bagging grass clippings accounted for approx. 220,000 tons of garbage collected in Pinellas County alone each year.

The belief that grass clippings caused thatch build up is untrue. Thatch is primarily composed of roots and stems. When lawns are healthy and existing thatch is thin grass clippings don't contribute to it.

So, don't bag it, recycle it.

Ken Dobler  
kdobler@ameriscapeusa.com  
Director of Safety, Training and Quality Assurance

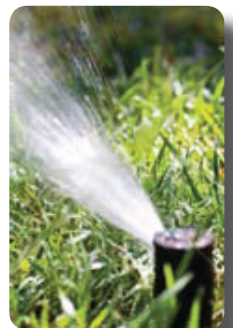
## The Water Meter

Most of the areas where Ameriscape provides land care services have had adequate rain fall as of the writing of this letter. I have to mention though, how it never ceases to amaze me how quickly the landscapes in the Tampa Bay and surrounding areas can dry out. We can have a record setting week of rain followed by just 5 days of hot dry weather and the landscape looks like it hasn't seen water in eons. Our hydrological cycle is really way beyond amazing. As well is water.

All life has some connection to water. For most plants like most life it is absolutely essential. Thank goodness our amazing planet comes complete with its own sprinkling system. From the gathering of the water from a source, to turning the liquid into gas, then storing it above the earth, and finally moving it and dispersing it where it sees fit. It's automatic! We just have no control over it, hence the need for automated sprinkling systems.

Automated sprinkling systems allow us to control where the water goes, and when. It kind of gives us the control mother nature won't share in regards to water on our landscapes. As I mentioned, it only takes a few days without rain for a landscape to show signs of stress. To me this necessitates a property or project having a well designed, fully functional, and automatic sprinkler system. Many of the properties we see do not have sprinkler systems that adequately irrigate the landscaping on those properties. Most of it is due to the age of the sprinkler system. Some of it is poor design or faulty workmanship. Sometimes we see systems that were installed properly but not professionally maintained or repaired. All result in loss of landscape and wasted water.

The recent weather conditions should not encourage procrastination in regards to necessary maintenance, or repair to your irrigation system, in fact, just the opposite. Take advantage of the weeks when mother nature handles the watering of your landscape, and prepare your irrigation system for when she won't. If you need some help with that, call Ameriscape Services. We offer full service irrigation installation, and repair. All done professionally.



Chuck Barrett  
813-239-6826  
cbarrett@ameriscapeusa.com



## Tips From The Pros

Bayside Arbors

Summer and Fall. A time for relaxation, warmth, fun in the sun, and vacationing; unless of course you in the Greens' Industry. For us here at Ameriscape Services, summer is anything but relaxing. From a business stand point we deal with increased labor and equipment costs. From a personnel stand point we deal with burn out and heat related stress. From a Horticultural stand point we deal with everything to the extreme. The rain has been plentiful, but scattered. Seems like the places where we could use rain, the clouds skip over, and the places that are drenched just keep getting more. I think nature is keeping suit with the human lifestyle in this new millennium: To The Extreme.

Well, they say you can't beat a majority, and you can't rule Mother Nature, so I guess our landscapes had better be extreme too. Again, judging by weather patterns, our landscapes had better be extremely durable in all types of weather. Judging by popular demand, they had better be extremely attractive too. More now then ever corporate America is learning that an attractive landscape can make or break a project or property. Here are a few suggestions that can make your landscape extreme:

**1. Choose the right plants for your area.** Those of you that know me are probably sick of hearing me say this. Get used to it! It is the most sound advice I can offer. Some of the criteria for determining the right plant are;

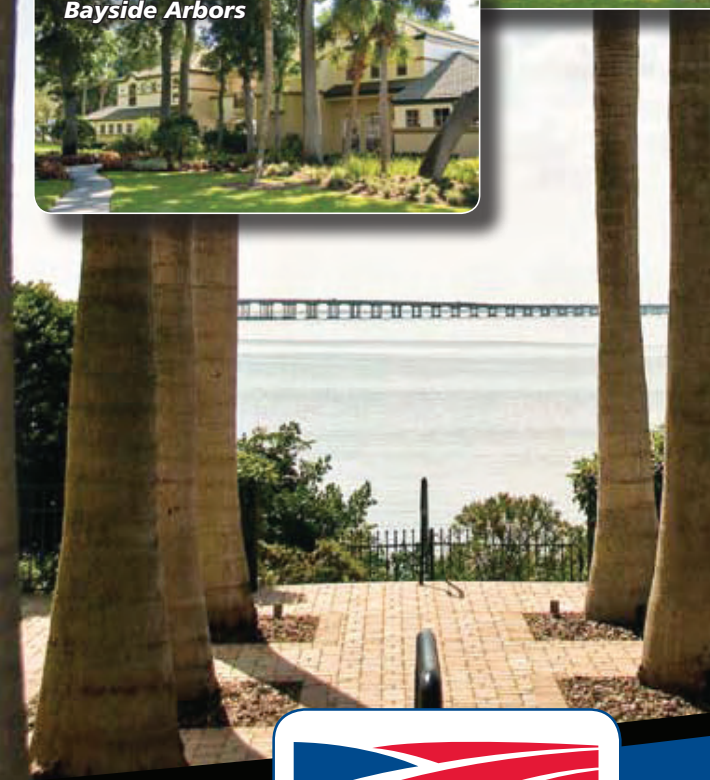
- A. Choose plants that thrive in the soil conditions present on your property.
- B. Choose plants that are most closely acclimated to the average moisture level on your property.
- C. Choose plants that can tolerate the amount of cold weather your area typically receives.
- D. Choose plants that have a mature size that fits your area.
- E. Choose plants that have the right shape for your landscape.
- F. Choose plants that have the right form for your landscape.
- G. Choose plants that have the right texture for your landscape.
- H. Choose plants that have the right color for your landscape.

I hope you noticed that there are 4 items dealing with the elements that will affect the botany of the plant, and 4 dealing with the elements of good design. I firmly believe that truly good design gives maintenance as much consideration as aesthetics. It's only logical. If not properly maintained even the most aesthetically pleasing landscape won't stay that way for long.

**2. Deal with a professional full service landscape company.**

The guy that maintains the landscape is the guy who sees what goes on in that landscape every week. He can communicate to a designer what issues he deals with on a regular basis. The designer in turn can plan accordingly. This communication simply does not take place when there is one company for the design / install, and another for the maintenance. Ameriscape Services is the solution. A kind of Super Target for your landscaping needs.

Chuck Barrett  
813-239-6826  
cbarrett@ameriscapeusa.com



**813.789.3554**

**Call Doug Mills  
for information  
about our services**



## **Best Management Practices (BMP) - it's the law!**

On June 18, 2009 Governor Charlie Crist signed Bill SB494 that requires Commercial Fertilizer Applicators to have a Certificate of Completion in the BMPs and a "Limited Certification for Urban Landscape Commercial Fertilizer Application".

This program is designed to reduce non point source pollution from lawn and landscape maintenance, particularly potential pollution from fertilization. The program is also about both Horticultural and environmental issues and the impact on water quality that our actions can have on reducing potential pollution.

In 2003, the BMP educational program began as a Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Institute of Food and Agriculture Science partnership. The BMP training has since been required in some areas by local government fertilizer ordinances over the last few years in some cities and counties around the state such as Duval County, the City of Tallahassee and much of the Tampa Bay region.

The new state law requires that all commercial fertilizer applicators in Florida comply with the law by January 1, 2014.

Mike Moseley  
Sarasota Branch Manager  
813-299-5339  
mmoseley@ameriscapeusa.com  
Article provided by Ameriscape Services



**[www.ameriscapeusa.com](http://www.ameriscapeusa.com)**

**[dmills@ameriscapeusa.com](mailto:dmills@ameriscapeusa.com)**

**813.789.3554  
Doug Mills**

**For information about our services contact:**

**[jchiellini@ameriscapeusa.com](mailto:jchiellini@ameriscapeusa.com)**

**813.299.8915  
Joe Chiellini**

**AMERISCAPE  
SERVICES**  
18711 Dale Mabry Hwy N  
Lutz, FL 33548