

The Groundhog



A Newsletter for and about Mentone

March, 2013

Into the Wilds

Invite Pollinators into Your Garden

Maybe you are like lots of gardeners who have noticed fewer bees in the landscape. Or maybe you have noticed vegetables like squash and cucumbers are not setting as many fruits as they used to. This could be due to a lack of pollinators. You too probably hear that honeybee populations



More than honey bees are needed for pollination

have decreased but did you know they are not the only pollinators available?

Gardeners have learned to depend on honeybees but they are not native to the new world. Certainly before they arrived with the early settlers, plants were being pollinated by other native bees, wasps, flies, moths, butterflies and more. They are still in the area but often need to be invited to visit your landscape. The best way to make them feel at home is with colorful flowers and plants they like. When they come in to visit, they are naturally going to visit all the flowers including those in the vegetable patch.

Notes From The Board

Board Members for 2012

Thank you to all the Board Members who work hard volunteering to keep Mentone looking good and running smoothly. The Board members for the next year are:

2013 Board Members/Officers

President - Irving Lampert

Vice President - John Dickinson

Secretary - Beverly Dickinson

Treasurer - Jeremy Cook

Director - Mary Opel



Pool News

The pool will start to be heated as of April 1. As I write this newsletter the temperature is supposed to go down to 29 degrees! Hard to think about swimming...

All Mentone Spring Garage Sale

Saturday, April 20 8:00 am

Spring is a great time to clean out your garage and closets. Turn your unneeded items into cash. Keep trash out of landfills. Recycle! Everyone's happy.

The management will put signs out on Archer Road. If you put your own signs, please be sure to take them down after your sale.



Pollinators, continued.

Pollinators are most likely to stop by if the plants they like are growing in clusters several feet in diameter. These are more likely to be more attractive spots to visit. You might stage these displays in or near the vegetable garden. Also, plant to have flowers opening throughout the entire growing season. This may be year-round locally as something is always producing in the garden.

Try to reduce pesticide use among all plantings. Only use the least toxic product first to gain control of pests. Remember some can be hand picked from the plants. Also note, many of the pollinators look harmful, so have questionable insects identified before you reach for the pesticide. They may be some of our good bugs.

Plan to plant lots of the flowers pollinators like. Some that invite them to stop by include many herbs like chives, basil, dill and fennel. Remember you have to usually let them bloom to be effective. Some good traditional flowers include the wild mustards, blanketflower, butterfly flower, coreopsis, cleome, marigold, salvia, sunflower, sweet almond and zinnia. Usually any colorful plant will do.

Now here is something we also need to think about. The pollinators have to live somewhere. Often they nest among trees and shrubs or in the ground. Soon gardeners are going to be seeing solitary bees nesting the sandy ground. Try to tolerate these insects as they are reluctant to sting and only around for a few weeks.

(reprint from Tom's Digs, Orlando Sentinel)

Fun Idea for A Kids Adventure

Have you taken your kids (young and old) to the Two Tales Elephant Ranch? It's an elephant sanctuary, started in 1984. The ranch was built to board both Asian and African elephants needing temporary or permanent housing, regardless of health or dispositions. Over 250 elephants have passed through the gates of the ranch for a variety of reasons. Some stayed temporarily while their own exhibits were being remodeled or built. Others stayed for retirement, medical needs, behavior problems or even in emergencies after hurricanes destroyed their zoos.

For more info and directions (18655 NE 81st Street, Williston) go to <http://allaboutelephants.com/>

A Tip about Coral Snakes

A resident encountered a coral snake in your yard and requested some information in this newsletter about them. I recently visited Devil's Millhopper and learned how to identify a coral snake. There are two non-venomous Coral Snake "look-alikes" (Scarlet Kingsnake and Scarlet Snake) that can be confused with the Coral Snake at first glance, but they can easily be identified as non-venomous by the order of their colored bands (red touching black). Remember the "stoplight phrase" -- when you see a snake with bright red, yellow & black bands, remember "yellow, red, STOP!" *In the venomous Coral Snake, the yellow and red bands touch.* In the two non-venomous species the black and red bands touch—these snakes also have red, rather than black, snouts.

Interestingly, all of the pit vipers give birth to live young, and the Harlequin Coral Snake is the only venomous egg-laying species in Florida. Therefore, when snake eggs are encountered, they almost certainly belong to a non-venomous species and can be left in place unharmed without fear for your safety.



Harlequin Coralsnake (Adult) - Note the black nose and the touching red and yellow bands

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