



## Grounds Operations Survey Response #1 (May 8, 2019)

As a follow-up to the recently completed residents' survey, the Shadow Wood Landscape Operations Team (the Green Team), in coordination with the Landscape Committee, will present a brief series of communications focusing on the key items noted by the residents.

Before diving into the survey comments, we thought it would be helpful to introduce the Green Team members. We recognize that although they are an integral part of our community, many residents do not know who they are.

George Pittman, Department Manager, is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Horticulture & Landscape Design. He is an FNGLA Certified Horticulture Professional, an ISA Certified Arborist and an FDACS Commercial Pesticide Applicator. George has been serving the Shadow Wood Community Association since 2006 and is originally from Naples, Florida.

Luz Salazar, Department Assistant Manager, is an FNGLA Certified Horticulture Professional and an FDACS Certified Pesticide Applicator. She has been serving the Shadow Wood Community Association since 2003 and is originally from Mexico.

Justin Oelmann, Hardscapes Assistant, has been serving the Shadow Wood Community Association since 2006 and is originally from Iowa. He is responsible for assets such as pavement surfaces, lighting, fountains, boardwalks and electrical infrastructure in the common areas.

Deborah Owen, Administrative Assistant, is an IAAP Certified Administrative Professional. Deb has been serving the Shadow Wood Community Association since 2007 and is originally from Tampa Bay, Florida.

Surprisingly, you will note that there are only 18 people on the team, above and beyond the four shown above, working 40 hours/week. This small group is responsible to maintain 7 miles of right of way flanking the roadways, 38 acres of turf grass, 32 acres of plant beds, 2 miles of boundary walls, 20 center lane miles of roadway, and 6 miles of pedestrian paths!

The SWCA Landscape Maintenance team handles all of the routine tasks in-house related to the maintenance of trees, shrubs, flower beds, flowering pots, irrigation systems and turf (except for weekly turf mowing, which is performed by an outside contractor). That said, we do bring in outside contractors to help perform specialized

tasks such as palm tree trimming, hardwood structural pruning, mulching and annual flower rotations which happens three times a year. The Hardscapes team also brings in outside help for boardwalk maintenance, curb/gutter cleaning, paver cleaning/sealing, painting, pavement resurfacing, concrete curb/gutter repairs and electrical.

Many of our professional decisions on plants are made as a result of discussions with the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Florida National Growers Landscape Association (FNGLA) and the Village of Estero. We have strong working relationships with our green industry peers and communicate regularly with those colleagues and local professionals who share trends and issues in SWFL.

The Landscape Department makes up 60% of the annual SWCA operating budget and totals \$2,100,000. We budget each year for wages, plant replacements, mulch/sand/soil, pesticides/fertilizer, utilities, outside services for repair and maintenance, employee training and development, insurance and depreciation. The Capital Replacement budget spans 30 years and covers significant repairs or replacement of the hardscapes (non-organic) infrastructure such as asphalt roadways, pavers, catch basins, monument signs, light poles, maintenance building and equipment, and perimeter fences and walls.

The survey showed residents are very pleased with many of the areas we maintain, giving them particularly high marks in:

- Annual Flowers – 97% (Satisfied or Very Satisfied)
- Trees & Shrubs – 94%
- Coconut Road Entrance Fountains – 97%
- Coconut Road Entrance – 94%
- Three Oaks Parkway Entrance – 90%
- Roadways – 97%
- Pedestrian Paths – 96%

Our series will focus on answering the comments and key questions raised from the survey. We also hope to clarify the jurisdictions between the Community Association, the Country Club, and the Brooks Community Development Districts (CDD) in an effort to better clarify the community's expectations.

Reading through the survey comments, it is clear that some residents are somewhat confused between the responsibilities of the various organizations:

- SWCA – maintains common areas and the entrance/cul-de-sacs of the 14 Non-HOA neighborhoods.
- SW Country Club maintains the golf course, perimeter of golf course, adjoining fence.
- Brooks Community Development District (BCDD 1 & 2) maintains the lakes throughout the Brooks on behalf of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. They also maintain the natural preserve area and adjoining fence.

Click [here](#) to see a map of the various areas.

In response to the several residents who asked questions regarding trees and plants, we have a Q&A format:

Q: Why do we have Oak Trees & Black Olives?

A: Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and Black Olive 'Shady Lady' (*Bucida buceras*) are the two most prominent shade trees found in Shadow Wood. The original developer selected these species because they are two of the best shade trees in SW Florida and they both have very few problems. The Live Oak is known for its stately, sprawling branch structure and its strong root system. Yes, they shed leaves for a time during the winter. However, they flush back out quickly in the spring. The "Shady Lady" Black Olive is appreciated for its cooling shade, attractive leaf texture and layered branching characteristics. Unfortunately, the Black Olive is associated with pavement staining, and as a result, has a bit of a negative reputation. In short, the obnoxious bungee caterpillar or "OBC" is the culprit. These little guys are fond of the Black Olive and feed on the leaves, in varying degrees of intensity during the late spring. As we all know, what goes in must come out...so, it's the OBC's digestion system that's at fault, NOT the tree itself! The stains are a temporary nuisance and typically fade with the summer rains. In an effort to reduce the caterpillar population/bungee webs in the trees along the pedestrian path, the SWCA has begun systemic injection treatment of the trees to reduce the population and sequential staining.

Q: Why do we choose the plants we do?

A: George works with his staff and the Landscape Committee in choosing the best plants to meet the objective for a certain bed, group of beds or larger areas. There are many variables to consider such as line of sight, safety, and maintenance requirements just to name a few. For example, to open up a view for safety reasons, plants that grow only a foot or two off the ground are selected. Conversely, if the desire is to increase vegetation density in a buffer to help block out a certain view, plantings that grow tall and have very thick leaves are a reasonable choice. Lastly, if a pop of color is needed, flowering shrubs and/or shrubs with colorful leaves are an option. These choices depend on the location, sun/shade exposure, and the goal for that area. Lastly, ongoing consultation with local and regional growers keeps staff in the know on what is available and trending in our area. Staff and the Landscape Committee continue to be on the lookout for plant species that make Shadow Wood even better while conforming to our "controlled natural" theme.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey and ask questions on topics of interest.

The next edition will focus on the annual flower rotations, entrance and bridge pots, and four corners (Oakwilde & Knollview). Until then please enjoy our magnificent community and have a safe and enjoyable Springtime!

*George Pittman and the Landscape Operations Team and the Landscape Committee*