

Sanibel's Vegetation Standards

Protect Homeowners



(Author's Note: This is the first in a series of articles by members of the City of Sanibel Vegetation Committee dealing with vegetative matters of concern to island residents. Members of the Vegetation Committee are Sanibel residents appointed by City Council for one-year terms. To be considered for appointment, contact the City Manager's Office at (239) 472-3700.)



Dune Sunflower (*Helianthus-debilis*)
Photo Courtesy of City of Sanibel

For decades, Sanibel residents have sought to maintain the island's sanctuary character by protecting our native environment. To help in this effort the City has adopted vegetation standards for homeowners and businesses. These include:

- A requirement that at least 75% of all vegetation (trees, shrubs and groundcovers) on a property be native plants; up to 25% may be non-invasive, exotic species.
- Property must be kept clear of 8 specific invasive exotic plants such as Brazilian pepper.
- Pruning of native plants is limited to 25% of the total leaf area in any one year.
- The type and use of fertilizer is carefully regulated to protect our water. This includes a ban on fertilizer use during the summer rainy season.
- A permit is always required to trim mangroves, to trim in the beach zone (dune), and to move or remove any protected native plant.
- All landscape contractors or persons hired to work on landscape must have a Sanibel Vegetation Competency Card. All professional fertilizer applicators must also be certified by the City.

Native plants survive and thrive in our highly variable weather conditions (summer heat and rain and winter droughts), alkaline soils and proximity to salt water. They require little or no supplemental irrigation, do not need fertilizer and provide habitat for native wildlife.

The Natural Resources Department section of the City's website, www.mysanibel.com, offers information and photos of native plants, a listing of licensed contractors, Sanibel's vegetation standards and codes, the Environmental Reference Handbook prepared by the City's Vegetation Committee, and much more. The Vegetation Committee also offers free native plant tours of the grounds at City Hall at 10:00 AM on the 2nd Wednesday and 4th Saturday of the month from November to April. Additional information is available by contacting the Sanibel Natural Resources Department at (239) 472-3700.