

## *CoastScapes:* Landscaping for Wildlife and Water Quality



### **CoastScapes**

*CoastScapes* are environmentally-sound native plant landscapes which benefit people, the local environment, and coastal Georgia. *CoastScaping* advocates a “holistic” approach to landscaping through principles inspired by relationships in the natural environment.

The University of Georgia Marine Extension Service (MAREX) is developing a *CoastScapes* program which teaches about the link between landscapes and the greater environment, and provides people with knowledge and resources to make their home and coastal Georgia community both wildlife and water quality friendly.

### **Where Can You Find CoastScapes?**

*CoastScapes* can be planted at private home lawns, business grounds, container gardens, schoolyards, offices, businesses, parks – wherever traditional landscaping is generally used.

### **Why CoastScapes?**

- *CoastScapes* are low-input landscapes, requiring less mowing, less fertilizing, and less pesticide use;
- *CoastScapes* help to protect the water quality in our streams, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters;
- *CoastScapes* are attractive, colorful landscapes with hundreds of colorful and beneficial plants to choose from; and
- Along with reducing pollution, *CoastScapes* provide diverse habitats for songbirds, small mammals, butterflies, and other creatures.

With *CoastScapes*, native plants are used to:

- Provide habitat for local and migratory animals;
- Improve water quality and reduce stormwater; and
- Reduce the need for chemical pesticides and herbicides.

*CoastScapes* is also valuable for the gardener or landowner because it:

- Offers great visual interest than lawn;
- Reduces the time and expense of mowing, watering, fertilizing, and treating lawn and garden areas; and
- Can address areas with problems such as erosion, poor soils, steep slopes, or poor drainage.



### **What are Native Plants and Why Use Them?**

Native or indigenous plants naturally occur in the region in which they evolved. In North America, plant species are generally described as native if they occurred here prior to European settlement. They are adapted to local soil, rainfall and temperature conditions, and have developed natural defenses to many insects and diseases. Because of these traits, native plants will grow with minimal use of water, fertilizers, and pesticides. Wildlife species evolve with plants; therefore, they use native plant communities as their habitat. Using native plants helps preserve the balance and beauty of natural ecosystems. In addition, native plants can match the finest cultivated plants in beauty, while often surpassing non-natives in ruggedness and resistance to drought, insects, and disease.