

Do-It-Yourself Sustainable Native Garden

A butterfly garden is a great addition to any landscape. Because native plants have evolved with Florida's soils and climate, they already conserve water and minimize the need for fertilizer and pesticides. Many native plants also serve as host plants for caterpillars and nectar sources for butterflies and hummingbirds.

Why not take it one step further ? Our butterfly garden was retrofitted with simple technology which takes advantage of two renewable resources: sunlight and rain water. Minimizing your impact on global climate change can also save money on your utility bills!

Our solar energy system was purchased as a "Do It Yourself Solar Lighting Kit" from Gaiam Real Goods, 1-800-919-2400, www.realgoods.com.

The solar energy system entails:

solar panel - 2x2 ft photovoltaic panel: \$375

charge controller: \$260

deep cycle solar charged 12-volt battery: \$125

**fuse box, electrical boxes, wiring, connectors,
and switches: \$175**

The other components were purchased at a local hardware store.

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The rain water irrigation system entails:

rain cistern - 550 gallon, \$485

12-volt water pump, \$95

small water pressure tank, \$55

drip irrigation tubing and accessories, \$65

standard pvc plumbing, \$55

Small pond water feature:

12-volt pump, filter, tubing, gravel, liner, \$85

Miscellaneous hardware:

fasteners, mounting brackets, posts...etc., \$75

Total Cost - \$1,850

This project can be a fun and innovative way to incorporate sustainability into your landscape while helping our planet. *Check to ensure it will not conflict with your community's property improvement code.*

Stay informed of the issues and discover new ways to help.

***Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
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