

Educating with Extension



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Green Purchasing and EPP by Alicia Betancourt, FYCS Extension Agent



What is Green Purchasing?

Green Purchasing is the buying of goods and services that have a reduced negative impact on human health and the environment as compared to other goods and services serving the same purpose.

What is EPP?

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) helps the federal government "buy green," and in doing so, uses the federal government's buying power to stimulate market demand for green products and services. First created to help federal purchasers, the Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/epp>) can help green vendors, large and small businesses, and consumers.

Green Purchasing for Monroe County Government and Businesses

Municipalities and businesses have tremendous power in the marketplace because of the frequency and volume of their purchases. In fact, 13% of our gross national product (GNP) is municipal procurement. Businesses require significant amounts of energy, water, paper, supplies, and equipment. As companies develop **green purchasing** policies that increase the demand for earth-friendly products and services, suppliers will strive to meet that demand by shifting production to environmentally-sensitive goods.

Because of demand from local businesses, Monroe County suppliers such as **SYSCO**, **Cheney Brothers, Inc.**, and **Office Depot** continue to add green products for delivery to Monroe County.

EPP can carry a small price premium or none at all. However, the cost of products whose eco-version is pricier can sometimes be offset by savings from more efficient operations. For instance, ENERGY STAR-qualified computers promise up to a 70% reduction in energy usage, which translates to lower electric bills and fewer greenhouse gases emitted. To put a cap on spending for green products, many businesses are setting a limit of 10 to 15% above conventional office product costs.

An example of how **green purchasing** programs save money is **San Diego's** 2007 expanded EPP program.

What Offices Buy

Paper: Ironically, the introduction of e-mail (as well as a 600% increase in printer accessibility) has caused office paper use to increase 40%. Americans use six times more paper per capita than the world average according to **ForestEthics - A Business Guide to Paper Reduction**.



Computers: U.S. sales of computers topped 68 million units in 2007, a figure that has been growing at rates of at least 8% per year. This carries enormous implications for energy use, hazardous waste, and human health. This manufacturing process creates large amounts of waste. Furthermore, once these computers become obsolete, they create an additional source of waste.

Pencils and pens: Even office mainstays as small and low tech as pencils and pens have an impact. Worldwide, between 14 and 15 billion pencils are produced a year, enough to circle the globe more than 62 times. And 1.6 million single-use pens are destined for U.S. landfills.

Kitchen appliances and supplies: **Refrigerators**, which are common in office kitchenettes, use more energy than any other kitchen appliance. With their high electricity consumption, refrigerators also contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. The average refrigerator sold in 2002 created 1,832 pounds of CO₂ per year.



Questions to get you started

Developing an environmental purchasing policy for your business is a crucial step toward smooth implementation of sustainable purchasing practices. To help you get an idea of your company's green supply strengths or weaknesses, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your company use products that are reusable or contain reusable parts (**rechargeable batteries**, refillable pens, etc.)?
- Does your office use products that are recyclable (copy paper, **printer cartridges** that can be **recycled**, etc.)?
- Is your company currently using products made from recycled materials (paper with **high recycled content**, pens or **carpet** made of recycled plastic, etc.)?
- When purchasing computers and other products that require **electricity**, does your company buy **ENERGY STAR** products when available?
- Is your company purchasing office furniture, electronics, and other items that are long-lasting? By choosing items that will last longer, you save natural resources and prevent additional waste from entering landfills and waterways.
- Are you using products with Florida approved **"green" labels**?
- When you buy new big-ticket items, does your company purchase longer warranties so that when they break down, they can be fixed rather than replaced?



For more "Green Purchasing Links" see page 4.

What is DDIS?

You may have seen the acronym DDIS on our Web site. Or you may have learned about it if you took a Master Gardener Training Class. For those of you who don't know what DDIS means, it is a Web-based **D**istance **D**agnostic and **I**dentification **S**ystem that was developed jointly by Extension agents, specialists, and UF/IFAS Information Technology staff.

DDIS serves growers' and homeowners' needs for quick identification and diagnostic services as a basis for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs.

Although the system is specifically designed for university agricultural specialists and diagnostic laboratories or clinics, the DDIS Media Library is open to the general public and anyone is welcome to contribute images. For more information, log onto <http://ddis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

DDIS provides a collaboration and communication tool for first detectors, Extension specialists, and diagnosticians to share information on plant insects and diseases. It uses field data and digital media as tools for enhancement of diagnosis of plant diseases, insects, weeds, invasive species, plant management, physiology, and nutrient problems.

The system has the advantage of associating the images or videos and related descriptions in a searchable database. The resulting archive of samples gives a robust library for future research and Extension use.

Through interactions on the Internet between Extension agents and specialists, problems can be quickly communicated and assessed. Specialists in Florida can perform diagnosis and identification and provide best management practice (BMP) recommendations to the users. The archived DDIS database becomes a resource for research, educational programs, and classroom teaching.

Bug of the Month: Aphid

Aphids are soft bodied pear-shaped insects less than 1/8" long and green in color, but many are black, brown, pink, yellow, blue, or white. Most aphids are wingless but when colonies become overcrowded or the host plant becomes undesirable, winged forms are produced and establish new colonies.

Aphids have piercing-sucking mouth parts and cause damage by sucking the plant juices. They are usually found on stems, undersides of leaves, and on flower buds. Their ability to transmit plant virus diseases may be more harmful than any direct feeding damage.



Photo by Eileen Buss
University of Florida

Aphids seem to be especially troublesome on plants that are in shaded areas. Their feeding causes the leaves to curl or crinkle, and flower buds may become hardened causing the flowers to be distorted.

Aphids excrete large amounts of honeydew which is a sugary liquid composed of unused plant sap and waste products. This provides an excellent medium for the growth of a black fungus called sooty mold.

A great Web site for more information on aphids is www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/fasulo/woodypest/aphids.htm.

This article is an excerpt from an EDIS publication, "Aphids on Landscape Plants" by Eileen Buss. (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG002>)

To find out what to do to resolve an aphid problem, log onto www.floridakeyslandscapeadvisor.com.

Media Recap and other announcements

Environmental Horticulture Agent, Kim Gabel, spoke on US 1 Radio's "Morning Magazine" twice; once about [Bufo Frogs](#) and again regarding the release of parasitoid wasps to control the Pink Hibiscus Mealybug. On WGMX's "Morning Mix" she discussed "What's Bugging your Landscape?" On KONK 1680 AM, she talked about the fourth "R" (rot) composting. Kim's name was mentioned in a *Key West Citizen* article entitled, "Hunt for orchids requires a walk on the local wild side." In a *Solares Hill* article, she was asked about a humane way to get rid of iguanas. Her blog, [Florida Keys Landscape Advisor.com](#) was featured as a Florida Friendly-Landscaping Success Story in the online July edition of "The Neighborhood Gardener" newsletter, published by the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods and Florida Master Gardener programs.

Family, Youth, and Community Sciences Agent, Alicia Betancourt, spoke on US 1 Radio's "Morning Magazine" twice; once about Green Purchasing for homes and businesses (see front page article) and again about recycling paper and plastic bags. She also spoke on WGMX's "Morning Mix" to discuss Green Purchasing.

The **2009-2010 IFAS Extension Bookstore Catalog** is available at both Extension Offices, or online at <http://ifasbooks.com/catalog/default.html>.

The catalog has a variety of books, CDs, DVDs, identification decks, and posters for sale, as well as training and certification manuals and CEUs. All items are the result of collaborations between research scientists and educators from the University of Florida campus, 16 Research & Education Centers, and 67 Extension Service offices. Subjects range from A (Agriculture) to Z (Zebra Swallowtail Butterfly) and everything in between.

The Web site address for the bookstore is <http://www.ifasbooks.ufl.edu/merchant2/>.



**Family, Youth,
and Community
Sciences**
Alicia Betancourt

Alicia worked with members of the Monroe County Green Initiatives Task Force (GITF) to provide resources and information for grant applications and project development. She also worked on the Greenhouse Gas Emission Audit.

Alicia attended ICLEI's Local Government Operations Protocol (LGOP) Training via Webinar. The LGOP is the new national standard for local government emissions inventories. Understanding the LGOP will be useful for Monroe County government's inventory and any report written to convey this information to legislators or the public.

Alicia joined Extension educators in a series of conference calls designed to enhance financial education programs. Each focused on a particular topic related to strengthening programs.

She researched and developed supplemental material for the High School Financial Literacy Program, including learning the benefits of "America Saves" partnership. Other Extension educators have successfully integrated America Saves campaigns into educational programs, shared financial education programs that worked and learned from those that didn't work, and located new resources.

Some of the new financial literacy resources are:

- **Ask Doctor Debt**
www.askdoctordebt.com
- **Cooperative Extension System**
[www.extension.org/pages/
Personal_Finance_Chats](http://www.extension.org/pages/Personal_Finance_Chats)
- **National Foundation for Credit Counseling** www.debtadvice.org
- **Teach Children To Save**
www.aba.com/ABAEF/tcts.htm
- **Financial Literacy Online**
www.nslpflonline.org



**Marine & Solar
News**
Doug Gregory

Doug finished teaching the fourth 40-hour solar photovoltaic installation class through Florida Keys Community College. Classes have been held in Key West, Marathon, and Key Largo. To date, 51 local electricians, contractors, and others have completed the course with 21 advancing to attain the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners "Photovoltaic Entry-Level Certificate of Knowledge" by passing a national exam.

He participated in a Florida Sea Grant Climate Change Workgroup conference call to prepare an education grant proposal for statewide programming.

He attended two BOCC budget meetings in Marathon.

Doug assisted two local entrepreneurs with developing state agency contacts for their business plan.

He assisted two UF graduate students with their research regarding the sociology of local fisheries and in particular, the lobster trap certificate program.

Doug met with the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection Overseas Heritage Trail and Florida Department of Transportation representatives twice regarding the need to modify the existing Conch Key Trap Storage Site to accommodate the trail that partially overlaps the same area.

He attended the Family, Youth, and Community Sciences Advisory Committee meeting in Marathon.

Doug participated in the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting in Tampa to review data and management proposals related to reducing the



logger-head turtle by catch in the reef fish long line fishery.



**Horticulture
News**
Kim Gabel

Kim coordinated the Home Grown Fruit Contest for the Florida Keys Tropical Fruit Fiesta, which was organized by Master Gardener Jeff Stotts. She also set up an Extension horticulture education booth staffed by nine Master Gardeners.

Kim trained 14 Master Gardeners on the techniques for releasing 3,000 parasitoid wasps, which are host specific to the Pink Hibiscus Mealybug, at 11 locations throughout the Keys.

She traveled to the Palm Beach County Extension Office for the Green Industries Best Management Practices (BMPs) workshop and taught one of the lecture topics, "Lawn and Landscape Cultural and Fertilization BMPs." Sixty people were in attendance.

Kim was invited to speak at the Frances Street Homeowners Association about iguanas and what information Extension Services had to offer. Forty people were present.

Kim attended a 4-week, 16-hour organic gardening class being taught by Redland Organics grower Andres Mendes.

She made 17 site visits:
Key West – Gumbo Limbo (2), Sago Palm, PHM wasp release (5)
Upper Sugarloaf Key – PHM wasp release
Summerland Key – Green Buttonwood
Ramrod Key – Lethal Yellowing
Big Pine Key – PHM wasp release
Marathon – PHM wasp release
Upper Keys – PHM wasp release (4)

Kim updated her blog, [Florida Keys Landscape Advisor](#), with an article entitled, "Bug of the Month: Aphid on your Landscape Plants." (See page 2, second column.)



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We're on the Web at <http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu>

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Extension programs and activities are open to all persons and do not discriminate with regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations.

Summer Plant Clinics

Kim and the Master Gardeners will be holding Plant Clinics in [Key West](#) and [Key Largo](#) all summer long.

Key West schedule

First and Third Mondays, from 9 am to noon, Extension Office, Gato Building, 1100 Simonton Street, Suite 2-260.

Key Largo schedule

First and Third Wednesdays, from 9 am to noon, Extension Office, Murray E. Nelson Government & Cultural Center, Suite 244, 102050 Overseas Highway, MM 102, Phone 453-8748.

Green Purchasing Links / Web sites

- [Natural Resources Defense Council \(NRDC\) - Greening Advisor](#)
- [GreenBiz - Buying Recycled](#)
- [City of Portland, Office of Sustainable Development: A Guide to Greening Your Bottom Line Through a Resource-Efficient Office Environment](#)
- [Green Seal's Choose Green Report: Office Supplies](#)
- [The Green Guide: Green Quizzes](#)

— New EDIS Publications —

◆ Transplanting Palms in the Landscape

Revised! A 9-page illustrated fact sheet by Timothy K. Broschat, discusses the various factors that contribute to palm transplant survival rate. Published by the UF Department of Environmental Horticulture. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP001>

◆ Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Florida: Estimates from Two Studies

A 12-page fact sheet by Tatiana Borisova, Norman Breuer, and Roy Carriker, focuses on one piece of the policy-making puzzle related to climate change: possible economic costs for the state of Florida associated with climate change projections. Published by the UF Department of Food & Resource Economics. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FE787>



UF/IFAS/MCES QUARTERLY CONTACTS

	May	June	July	Total
Phone calls	390	408	350	1148
Office visitors	33	38	40	111
Visits to clients	29	22	41	92
Group teachings	13	14	21	48
Participants	1154	237	213	1604
Media materials	6	6	7	19
Bulletins distributed	366	339	305	1010
TOTAL contacts	1991	1064	977	4032