

THANK YOU FOR BEING GREAT NEIGHBORS ... AND FOR YOUR PATIENCE

By Pastor Tracy Hunter
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As you may have noticed, Broadway UMC was vandalized recently. Almost all of the ground floor “regular” windows to the fellowship hall were broken as well as one stained glass window to the sanctuary. First of all, on behalf of the people of Broadway UMC, I want to thank our neighbor who called the police and reported the activity. The police arrived and arrested someone without additional damage and (more importantly) without anyone being hurt. Thank you, neighbor!

Second, we want to acknowledge the unsightliness of the boarded-up windows. We are troubled by the appearance as well. I assure you that we are working hard to repair, replace, or restore the windows. We filed an insurance claim, are gathering estimates and moving forward. .

On another note altogether, we participate in a district wide event on Sunday, September 28, called SundayServe. Instead of worshiping on that Sunday, we'll be serving our neighbors. We'd love to hear any ideas you might have! We're looking for projects that serve our neighbors (instead of our church:) that we can work on (maybe even complete:) in a couple of hours on a Sunday morning. Please call the church office (407.841.8902) or email me (thunter@flumc.org) with any ideas or suggestions.

NATIVE PLANTS THAT HANDLE THE HEAT

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coffee. But having no caffeine and being quite bitter it did not last as a drink of choice.

Yaupon Holly, *Ilex vomitoria*, is another great shrub for residential gardens. The most popular varieties are Bordeaux and Stokes Dwarf, both of which are low growing, perfect for small hedges. There are larger shrub and tree forms amiable as well. They are great for wildlife, both as a food source and shelter. Another interesting aspect is that they can be brewed as a tea that is almost identical to Yerba Mate, which comes from a very similar *Ilex* in Argentina. It's best made from a combination of dried and fresh leaves. You can ask the Google for recipes ...

Walters's viburnum is a fairly new introduction to Florida gardeners. It became available about 15 years ago and is a great shrub for wet or dry areas. It has beautiful clusters of white flowers in the spring. This native viburnum comes in many forms ranging from a medium-sized shrub to a small multi-trunk tree.

Hamelia patens 'Fireflies' is the newest cultivar of Fire Bush available on the market. It is a more diminutive form than those more commonly available which makes it ideal for residential gardens since it needs less pruning. It grows in full sun but can tolerate moderate shade and has profuse clusters of tubular vermilion flowers. And Fireflies, like all Fire Bush, is a huge attractor of hummingbirds, butterflies and other pollinators.

Zamia pumila has a very tropical appearance that looks like a fern or a low growing palm with its deep green fronds. Coontie is very tough groundcover and

extremely drought tolerant once it has become established. This plant was decimated by the early settlers who harvested it extensively to make arrow root. There was a factory that processed the starch in Lake Mary. But now thanks to nursery growers, this plant has made a big comeback via the landscape industry. It is another plant that takes a wide range of light from dense shade to full sun.

St. John's Mint, *Micromeria brownie*, is one of the best groundcovers that no one has heard of. It is ubiquitous in Florida, growing in most highway swales and ditches. It is even sold in pet stores as an aquarium plant. It obviously tolerates very wet conditions, but make a great container plant as well. It cascades and has delicate light green foliage and tiny white flowers. It is a handy culinary plant as a delicious and very potent mint; perfect for making tea and augmenting coffee.

Helianthus dubilis also known as Dune Sun Flower has a beautiful yellow flower and thrives in very dry, sunny locations ... It actually grows in the sand dunes at our local beaches. It is a low-growing groundcover that will creep along and root where it finds bare soil. This is an ideal plant where water conservation is paramount.

All of these plants thrive in the heat and humidity of central Florida's summers. And native plants are a very attractive, sustainable and cost-effective gardening solution. Not only do they provide food and habitat for wildlife, but they diminish the need for water, fertilizer and pesticides, all of which are great for the environment ...

Happy gardening!

