

DEP Recognizes Native Nurseries for 81 Percent Recycling Rate



Lilly Anderson-Messec, General Manager (center), Liz Marshall, Gift Shop Manager and Plant Buyer, Timothy Roop, Landscape Supervisor (left) as well as Joe Walthall, Karl Berlin, Jimmy Gunderson and Jordan Wilson (back, from left) display Native Nurseries' certificate recognizing an 81% recycling rate for 2013

On November 18, 2014, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection recognized [Native Nurseries](#) for recycling 80.6% of its solid waste in 2013. Located in Tallahassee and opened in 1980, the nursery employs 15 people in its retail garden center. The

nursery specializes in native plants and plantings for butterflies, birds and other wildlife, and organically grown herbs and vegetables as well as organic garden supplies. Native Nurseries also offers wild bird supplies, a nature gift shop and a small landscaping department. Their stated mission is to bring people and nature together in their yards and gardens.

Management has been guided for years by the concept of **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**, in that order. Their buyers purchase locally when possible, always purchasing quality items that last and with as little packaging as possible.

Reuse is next. Every piece of paper is used on both sides before being recycled. Cardboard boxes are cut into plant carrying boxes for customers to use; they can recycle after using. Large boxes are flattened and recycled. Rather than buying expensive and wasteful custom printed plastic sheets (the nursery standard) to line customers' trunks, the staff uses old newspapers from conveniently placed dispensers in the parking lot. Again the customer can easily recycle. All bubble wrap packaging is reused to wrap customers' breakable gift items. Packing peanuts are brought to packaging stores for reuse.

Plastic pots in one gallon sizes and up and trays are sent back to growers, given to home growers or reused at the nursery. Customers are encouraged to return these pots and trays for reuse.

All organic matter (35.9 tons in 2013) is hauled to Leon County Solid Waste Management Facility where it is processed into mulch for reuse.

Since 1980, Native Nurseries has been teaching workshops and writing articles for the local newspaper on topics pertaining to nature and gardening, always with an emphasis on sustainability. Topics include Organic Gardening 101, Planting a Refuge for Wildlife, Pollinators, Butterfly Gardening, How to Manage a Lawn and Garden without Chemicals, Parent/Child Birdhouse Build Workshop, Rain Gardens, Hummingbirds, BUGS Workshop for Children and many others. See their website at nativenurseries.com for more information.