

YARD OF THE QUARTER

1919 MEDINAH LANE



CINDY & STEVE TRIAY



At the July 10 Board of Directors meeting, the Magnolia Point Community Association Landscape and Irrigation Committee presented Cindy and Steve Triay a Certificate for '3rd Quarter 2023 Yard of the Quarter' for their residence located at 1919 Medinah Lane. Cindy and Steve moved into their beautiful home in 2005. They are the third owners. Cindy became certified as a UF-IFAS Master Gardener Volunteer. She decided she wanted to make her yard a refuge for the wildlife that was being displaced by the ever increasing development and urbanization of Clay County. The Triays reduced the lawn area and created large garden areas designed to attract birds, pollinators and other wildlife. Their yard has been certified a National Wildlife Federation Habitat and a Florida Friendly Landscape.

The front yard has a magnificent, towering Bald Cypress on one side of the driveway and a very large Canary Date Palm on the other. In place of grass around the cypress, a carpet-like bed of perennial peanuts covers the ground, hiding the "knees" or vertical outcroppings of the roots on the cypress, attracting pollinators and, as a "nitrogen fixer", it adds nitrogen to the soil for surrounding plants to utilize.

Throughout the yard, the emphasis is on caring for wildlife and hummingbirds and butterflies in particular, with host plants for butterfly larva and nectar plants for adults. In the front beds along the front path beneath the date palm, there are various bromeliad species in bloom, along with an enormous staghorn fern attached to an oak tree. The ground cover in this area is peacock ginger with beautiful variegated leaves and small pink or white flowers. The plant is edible and has medicinal uses.

When you turn the corner, a bed of native Goldenrod that flowers in the fall, attracts pollinators and beneficial insects and has been used for medicinal purposes. Passion plant vines with different colored blooms are found in several places throughout the garden areas and in the backyard there is a milkweed patch. Both these plants are host plants for butterfly larva. The garden areas are filled with several species of butterflies such as the monarch, the zebra wing, the orange fritillary and the pipevine swallowtail.

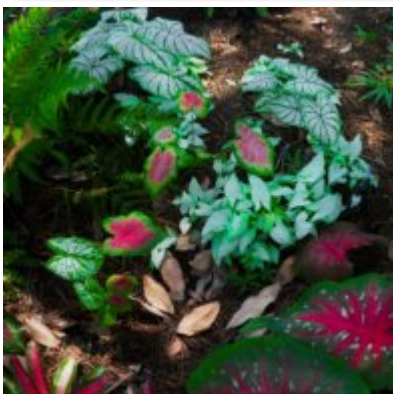
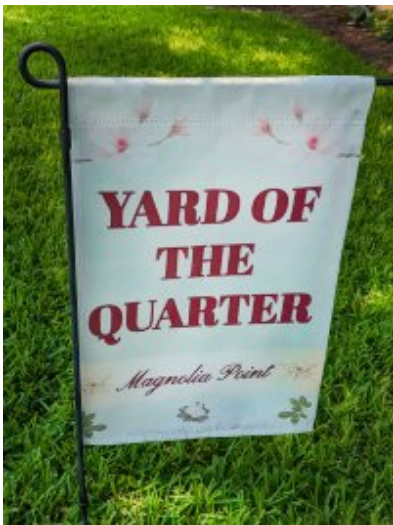
In addition, there are specimen plants such as blue bananas, the native Simpson's stopper, turks cap mallow, loquats, citrus and various varieties of ferns such as the rabbit's paw, kangaroo and autumn that are not often seen in our neighborhood gardens.

- CINDY FRANCISCO





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The Blue Java or 'Ice Cream Banana' bunch from 2021; Cindy is hoping the harvest will return this year.



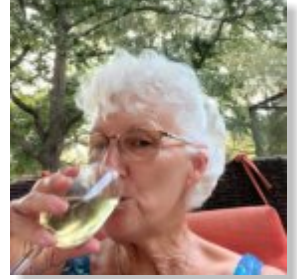
Photos: Editor





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'Ice cream is overrated'



What are some of the main improvements you've done to the yard?

As to improvements, Steve said I will never be done! My yard is a work in progress!! We added a water feature and grasses to the front entrance.

What do you enjoy most about your yard?

We recently added a purple Martin house and have at least 2 families already! So much fun to watch. I took out the rest of the hedges by the fire pit and moved the fountain that was in the front to the back (crazy me did it myself) and planted a flower garden which I already plan to change next year. This is becoming my favorite part of my yard. Watching the birds and just enjoying nature.

What are your plans, if any, for the yard?

I plan to plant natives to attract birds and Butterflies. I also plan on making changes to my vegetable garden. Make it into one long garden instead of three.

Tell us about fertilizing and care of the lawn.

I only fertilize 2 times a year, April 1 and September 1 with a 15-0-15 Lesco slow release fertilizer. I use no pesticides!!!! I pull most of my weeds by hand; I do not use weed killer on my lawn. Mowing St. Augustine: keep to at least 3 or 4 inches, never cut off more than 1/3 of the blade, and keep the blades of the mower sharp. This means mowing every 5 days. Never water in the evening in the summer as you can get a fungus. St. Augustine needs 3/4 to 1 inch of water a week. And never, ever scalp a southern lawn, you are asking for trouble.

Do you and Steve do your own maintenance, and what does that entail?

Yes, we do all the maintenance on the yard. If you want to attract butterflies and bees you cannot use pesticides. I also keep my yard natural, giving the critters a place to be during inclement weather.



Photos: C. Francisco

