

## Wellington NSP Landscaping

This past July the Wellington Garden Club collaborated with the city of Wellington's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which is called NSP. This program began when Wellington bought several homes in older neighborhoods that were beginning to decline due in part to foreclosures and high rental occupancy in the area. The idea was to spruce up the homes, then sell them to pre-qualified home buyers at reasonable prices. After the city spruced up the inside of the homes they called on our club to create a landscape plan to spruce up the outside and create curb appeal. We were asked to design new landscaping using native plants or Florida-friendly plants that don't require a lot of water. Then we supervised the installation using summer student volunteers.

We worked on three different residences – two were townhomes and the third was a single family home on a large corner lot. The single family home was the most challenging because it was the largest and contained many foundation plantings that were either dead or badly overgrown.

However, the entire NSP project was very rewarding for a variety of reasons:

First – It gave our club the opportunity to partner with the city of Wellington to achieve a common goal and gave the club lots of great publicity, including an article with photos in the Wellington Town Crier, a local weekly newspaper.

Second – We were asked to design the landscaping, but only had a budget of \$250 per home or townhouse, so we had to be very creative and watch our pennies.

Third – We supervised the installation using summer student volunteers who knew nothing about planting, so we became teachers to these very willing volunteers. And the amazing thing was that those who had a hard time getting their hands dirty at the beginning of the day, were pretty adept at planting and digging at the end of the day – and they were just as sweaty and dirty as the rest of us – remember this was in July!

Finally – Although we made a few mistakes ourselves along the way – such as not having irrigation lines flagged ahead of time, accidentally cutting a buried TV cable, finding large obstacles like rocks and old tree roots underground – we learned from our mistakes and quickly became flexible landscape designers.

A storyboard on this project is here today in the display area.