

BELL TOWER PARK LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE GENERAL UPDATE



Submitted July 9, 2025, by
Committee Chair, Dan Kerinuk

Hi There Everyone,

The Landscape Committee wanted to fill in all our Bell Tower Park Owners on the progress the Landscaping Committee and POA Board are making throughout our community.

You likely have *not* noticed that the green buttonwood planted throughout the fichus hedge wall has blended in quite nicely and is effectively filling in the empty places. We only lost one plant out of the large group planted. Soon the buttonwood will be completely blended, especially when the fichus is trimmed and shaped later this summer. As we continue to lose fichus, we will continue to replace them with green buttonwood, a much heartier, salt and drought tolerant plant.

As you have likely noticed, we completed the plantings on the gatehouse entrance, entrance corners, and boulevard end caps. All the plants seem to be healthy, and the roots are taking hold. The ground cover is already spreading, and we should be able to say goodbye to mulch very soon in those beds.

The bougainvillea planted along the county line seems to be healthy with a few “spikes” already appearing. However, we did lose all the blooms that the plants had when they were delivered. It will likely be a couple of years before we can trim into a hedge, but you have to start somewhere. We actually need another twenty-five plants to finish the project on both ends of the planting, but they will have to wait on the budget either in the fall or next year!

As you know from driving around, hardwood tree trimming is in progress. An arborist is inspecting each tree on the property, making recommendations and the trimming is being completed. While the tree folks are in the neighborhood, we have taken advantage and had several dead trees removed, but there are a few more to go before they finish. We will get them all before they leave.

Palm Trees over fifteen feet tall will be trimmed soon. Regular weed control and fertilization will resume as soon as the county moratorium is over.

Greenscapes is on schedule with an every-eight-week bush and shrub trimming cycle. Some plants, based on variety, will be hard cut to keep them healthy while others just

pruned. Keep in mind some of the very fast growers will be trimmed a little shorter than we might like and yet still may get shaggy during the rainy season, but we will try to take care of those “one offs” as required. Please submit them into Greenscapes’ online Zendesk app found on their website . (*Hints on how to access this system are further down in this report.*)

Speaking of **Greenscapes**, I would like to pass along this comment from one of our residents on the preserve side of Avon Park Circle:

*“The preserve has been growing so far into our backyard that the mowers have had to circle around it. **GOOD NEWS:** Last Friday [July 4th], I managed to transform the encroaching part of the jungle into a pretty big pile of small limbs. Being elderly, I called Greenscapes and asked them if they could remove the pile, and that I would be willing to pay for it. Yesterday, they not only came and cleaned it up -- since it was mowing day -- they called in the mower to cut the spot the pile had been on. Hope this gets to the people that b**ch and complain about the landscape folks. I think they are great! -- Jim Stewart*

“PS They did not charge me to remove the pile!”

A couple of weeks ago we ran across a “killer deal” on some Crepe Myrtle trees in various colors. The plants were in 30-gallon containers and had 3 to 5 trunks each. The grower was closing a field and wanted to move them. So, we took advantage of the opportunity and made the purchase at less than half the market price! In all, thirteen have been planted and seem to be doing quite well. You may even see some blooms on the trees -- after all, this is their flowering season. This variety of tree does have a dormant season during the winter where they will drop their leaves, may even look as if they have died. But they are so beautiful 9 out of 12 months it is worth it. We put together such a deal that in fact, if we had more money we would plant more.

Our thyme seed experiment is underway. We will either see some progress, or we won't! We sure do hope it grows, because it would be a very *inexpensive* way to add color to some areas that are currently difficult to keep turf and/or replace mulch with a perennial product, rather than constantly replacing either sod or mulch. If this works, we will try some wildflower that may be appropriate behind some of the buildings and/or on lakeshores.

Today, Leslie Casandra [Greenscapes supervisor] and I reviewed the entire property. We

will be doing this once a month looking at where turf needs replaced, and where the turf should fill in on its own with our seasonal rains. Additionally, we identified some areas, often where grass just doesn't seem to hold up, that we will plant ground cover. Now that we have identified and updated the "turf needed list" with all the areas of concern, Greenscapes will provide proposals, which then need to be approved and prioritized by the board. Then, the turf and ground cover work is scheduled.

Our monthly review of the property will also encompass looking at the plants, bushes, shrubs, ornamentals, beds, palm trees and hardwoods for areas that need attention. And again, we will follow the same process where Greenscapes will provide proposals, the board will decide what is to be done, the priority, and then the work will be scheduled. As you can understand, these processes take time. If you want to make sure your area of concern is reviewed, send in a "Zendesk" request, and we will look for sure.

Keep in mind it is the responsibility of the POA to plant, trim, and maintain the gardens, turf, ornamentals, beds, palm trees and hard wood trees. ***However, there seems to be a few folks that have taken it upon themselves to remove or severely trim plants around their home. Those gardens will be replanted and very likely at the homeowners' expense.***

We have recently been asked by homeowners to remove various plants, shrubs, bushes, trees, ornamentals or beds for some reason or another. It is the POA policy to not remove healthy plantings unless they are a ***physical danger*** to persons or property.

Remember -- If you want to modify the POA's landscaping (plants, trees, bushes, shrubs, turf, beds), it requires an ARC proposal and approval. Further details on that process are covered in the August 2023 Bell Tower Notes II Newsletter, page 19. (See the website under RESIDENTS AREA/MESSAGES, ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS/NEWSLETTERS.

Plants for your project must come from the approved "**Plant List**" which is available at:

- The BTP POA Website under RESIDENTS AREA/FORMS/INFORMATIONAL FLYERS or,
- The BTP POA Website under RESIDENTS AREA/HELPFUL TO KNOW/LANDSCAPE or,
- In the office

Once approved, you are able to proceed with the changes defined in the proposal.

The future projects for the committee include, but not exclusively, the screening with bamboo along the front wall as well as determining if there is a viable way to screen the steel building across from the clubhouse. We also would like to continue to shrink the

mulch beds where possible using sod and ground covers. Another future project is to “screen” the various electrical and cable boxes throughout the community.

Don't forget -- the best way to get your message to the landscape committee, Greenscapes and the Board is to use Greenscapes' **Zendesk** tool which is accessible from the new BTP POA Website. This process builds a tracking mechanism for Greenscapes, the board, and landscape committee, additionally on the monthly review list. ***(To see how to use Zendesk, visit the website's RESIDENTS AREA/HELPFUL TO KNOW/LANDSCAPE TAB.)***



Still we, the Landscape Committee, are happy to directly investigate any concerns or suggestions you may have. So, if you have any comments or questions, please also feel free to email us at dakjrfl@earthlink.net or call **239 851-8133**. And you are also welcome to join the Landscape Committee or attend our meetings which are on the **third Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm** in the clubhouse.