

The Lake at Camino Lakes

The 6-acre lake at the heart of the Camino Lakes neighborhood is an asset to the Association, providing aesthetic and recreational benefits to homeowners, absorbing storm water, and adding to the value of our homes. The lake is home to a variety of native wildlife, including moorhens, coots, red-winged black birds, turtles, and bass. It is visited by herons, egrets, and other wading birds. Osprey may be seen fishing in the lake.

The Lake Committee leads the effort to maintain the lake for all to enjoy. The lake is aerated by two pumps, one at each end of the lake, which usually operate at different times. To assure water quality, the lake is tested periodically for Coliform bacteria, dissolved oxygen and clarity.

Lake Appearance and Health

Homeowner activities on lake front lots can affect the appearance and health of the lake. Fertilizer runoff increases nitrogen and phosphorous levels in the lake which encourages algae growth. As well as being unsightly, algae may deplete oxygen in the lake which is detrimental to fish. Excrement from non-native species, such as Muscovy ducks, also increases nitrogen levels. In addition, grass clippings from mowing increases nitrogen in the lake if blown into the lake. Pesticide runoff can be harmful to wildlife in the lake.

To maintain lake appearance and the quality of lake water, homeowners should observe the following, including three Appearance Rules as noted:

- ◆ Do not fertilize, mow or apply pesticide within 10 feet of the lake.
- ◆ Avoid applying fertilizer or pesticide where it can wash into the storm drains which feed the lake.
- ◆ Maintain a swale along the shore which will reduce erosion and help prevent lawn runoff from reaching the lake. A swale is a low area or narrow shallow trough running parallel to the shore.
- ◆ Maintain native, non-invasive plants along the shore which will reduce erosion and also help prevent lawn runoff from reaching the lake. In addition, lake plants provide habitat for juvenile fish and native water fowl. Desirable shoreline plants include Sand cordgrass, Swamp-lily (Seven-sisters, String-lily), Pickerelweed, Golden canna (Bandana-of-the-everglades) and common cattails.
- ◆ Do not use anchors in the lake around the air hoses or between the air hoses and the air pump station. Even mushroom anchors can snag the air hoses requiring costly repairs.
- ◆ Do not put trash or other debris into the street storm drains or allow children to, as they feed the lake.
- ◆ Owners of water lots must not block their neighbors view within the rear setbacks. (Appearance Rule #14)
- ◆ Adding or feeding any living creature in, or around, the lake is prohibited except above ground bird feeders. (Appearance Rule #15)
- ◆ Owners of lake lots shall remove floating and submerged debris and remove Spatterdock, Torpedo Grass, and other undesirable weeds on an ongoing basis. Homeowners should maintain the shore by each individual home as desired with non-chemical trimming and weed removal. (Appearance Rule #16)

Suggested Alternatives to Cattails

The following plants are medium height and well controlled. They are suitable replacements for cattails.

COMMON NAME(S)	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMENTS
Sand Cordgrass	Spartina Bakeri	Should be planted just above water line and higher; cannot tolerate being under water for long period of time; should be cut back annually
Swamp-lily, Seven-sisters, String-lily	Crinum Americanum	Be sure to get this species, other species may become much bigger; should be planted in the water and cannot tolerate having their root system out of water for long period of time
Pickerelweed	Pontederia Cordata	Should be planted in the water and cannot tolerate having their root system out of water for long period of time; uses the nitrogen in runoff which helps the lake
Golden canna, Bandana-of-the-Everglades	Canna Flaccida	Should be planted just above water line and higher; cannot tolerate being under water for long period of time

Sources for additional information on these plants include:

- ◆ Floridata www.floridata.com/lists/wet_soil_plants.cfm
- ◆ Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants plants.ifas.ufl.edu
- ◆ Natives for Your Neighborhood regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantlist.asp