

PROTECT YOUR LANDSCAPING FROM FICUS WHITEFLY

A new intruder has made itself at home in South Florida and is feasting on the region's ficus plants. Due to the ficus' ability to quickly grow dense foliage, many residents use ficus hedges as a buffer from adjacent roadways, as well as a screen from neighboring properties.

Ficus whiteflies - small, winged insects - are causing considerable damage to ficus trees and hedges throughout southeastern Florida. They feed on the underside of leaves, leading to wilting, yellowing and, ultimately, leaf drop.

Because of the whitefly's destructive eating habits, the City of Sunrise is encouraging residents to be on the look out for signs of the insect, such as eggs on leaf undersides. If the pests are present, small, silvery-white spots might also be visible. Ficus trees without their leaves are one of the most obvious symptoms of a whitefly infestation. Although a ficus tree or hedge can survive defoliation, the infestation places stress on the plants and makes them more vulnerable.

Although efforts to understand and control this pest are ongoing, there are several potential options for whitefly control. However, it is necessary to consider the site (landscape, hedge, large tree, etc.), the size and number of trees, and the surrounding environment before taking steps to control this pest. For large trees, for example, a foliar spray may not be possible.

The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences offers a ficus whitefly overview designed to help homeowners identify this insect pest as well as treat and/or prevent whitefly damage. This information is available on the City of Sunrise's Web site at www.sunrisefl.gov.

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**VILLAGE MULTIPURPOSE CENTER
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PLUS-
What to do to protect your ficus from
whiteflies

November 2008

The City of Sunrise and the School Board of Broward County teamed up to bring a valuable asset to our community - the 18,000-square-foot Village Multipurpose Center, located at 2240 NW 68th Avenue, adjacent to City Park on Sunset Strip. In an innovative partnership, the Center was built on City-owned land, and construction costs were shared between Sunrise and the School Board. The facility, which held its official ribbon cutting on November 6, is currently being operated under a joint-use agreement.

The Village Multipurpose Center features classroom space, a gymnasium and a lighted parking lot. As part of this approximately \$5.3 million neighborhood enhancement project, City Park also received a new playground featuring slides and other equipment for children age two to 12, a rubberized play surface and a shade canopy.

Educational Programming

The Village Multipurpose Center was put to good use this summer, hosting a Sunrise children's camp program. Now that the school year is underway, the building is utilized by the School Board to deliver an innovative, individualized curriculum for adults age 18 and up. Courses are designed to help community members strengthen their skills and confidence, and achieve their goals. As part of the registration process, students will be assessed to determine which classes best meet their needs.

Educational offerings include: ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, with an emphasis on practical language skills for use at home, in the community and at work; ABE (Adult Basic Education) instruction in reading, writing and mathematics; and GED (General Education Development) programs to help students earn a high school diploma and apply their new skills in the workforce.

In addition, the Village Multipurpose Center hosts the School Board's Family Literacy Programs, which provide opportunities for parents and children to learn and grow together. While parents enhance their education and employability, they actively participate in their children's learning and success. Parent Education classes are available - along with free on-site childcare during class time. (The childcare program accommodates a limited number of one to four year olds.)

Best of all, tuition at the Center is free. Students pay only an annual \$10 activity fee, and a bi-yearly \$5 assessment fee. For more information about programs and registration, call (754) 321-7600 or visit www.mycommunityschool.com.

Recreational Programming

The City will utilize the Village Multipurpose Center to conduct recreation programming. Sunrise residents are eligible for a no-cost membership, which will enable them to access the gymnasium. In addition to league basketball, plans call for open gym hours, ping-pong, double-dutch jump rope and other activities. The City

is also working to develop a schedule of after-school programs for neighborhood elementary students, as well as nighttime recreation classes. Call the Leisure Services Department at (954) 747-4600 for more information.



The new playground at the Village Multipurpose Center features slides and other equipment for children age two to 12, a rubberized play surface and a shade canopy.