



# Big Earth

LANDSCAPE SUPPLY

## GREEN SENSE

GROW WITH US! SPRING 2010

### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS GROW INTO BIG NAME

Big Earth Landscape Supply came from humble beginnings: two men, mulch and a storage facility.

Al Rickert was selling mulch across the country from his storage facility in Palmetto, FL. He realized he lived in a market that bought landscape products twelve months a year, but was selling products in regions of the country with only nine months or less of landscape season. There was no one in Manatee County selling landscape supplies, so he decided to jump in and fill that void.

Rickert petitioned Raymond Warner, a family friend from his church, to join him and help manage the business. Warner had no prior landscape experience, but was looking to do something different with his career. Warner was vital to the success of the company. Without his willingness to leave his career behind, the business would have never started.

Warner and Rickert went in 50/50 to start the company in August 1983 and still own Big Earth today. It took about two months to start the business, which was modeled after some of Rickert's customers.

"A partnership built on trust contributed most to the success of the company," Rickert said. "We both held the foundational belief that God is our provider, and as partners, we were to glorify Him with our business."

Before Big Earth opened, the owners had a meeting with Bob Fowler at Landscape Creations, the biggest landscape firm in Manatee County at the time. After explaining their intentions and asking if

Landscape Creations would buy from Big Earth if it opened, Rickert and Warner were able to secure their first customer.

"The company started with Raymond's Ford F-150 pickup, a Ford tractor with a 1/3 yard bucket, and just one product – Cypress mulch – selling it both in bulk

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*Add charm and character to your landscape with our flagstone. It is the perfect material for walkways and low flower bed borders. We have a variety of colors and sell it by the pound. Delivery is available!*

### Employee Spotlight: **Nicholas 'Nic' Lambert**



When you see the Big Earth delivery truck headed your way, there's a good chance that the smiling face you see is **Nicholas "Nic" Lambert** from our Sarasota Store!

Nic joined the Big Earth team in April of 2007. Nic's work history includes working as a maintenance tech at BrightHouse, so along with delivering products to you, he is able to help keep our Sarasota Store in tip top condition! He can help you in our yard, ring up your sale, and then deliver it directly to you... and he does all this with the cheerful nature we have come to love here at Big Earth!

Nic was born in Texas, but moved to the great state of Florida when he was 12 years old. When he is not working, he loves to hunt and fish.

Nic also has a Rhodesian Ridgeback named Walker.

Nic says the one thing he would want customers to know about him is that he is honest. The favorite part of his job? Leaving customers happy after his deliveries!

**Check This Out!**

**PHOENIX SYLVESTRIS  
SILVER DATE PALM**

6' OA 45 Gal \$80.00

**NO MINIMUM ORDER!**



## DO YOU HAVE COLD DAMAGED PALMS?

Here are excerpts from an article by Monica L. Elliott, Ph.D. and Timothy K. Broschat, Ph.D. of the University of Florida

Trying to grow tropical palms in sub-tropical and temperate climates means cold damage is inevitable. This year's cold weather is not atypical for Florida. For many people, this is their first experience with severe cold damage.

As described in the EDIS document "Cold Protection of Ornamental Plants" (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg025>), there are two different types of freezes or frosts: radiational and advective.

Patience is essential with cold-damaged palms! Avoid the temptation to immediately trim damaged leaves. As long as **any** green tissue remains, the leaf should not be removed. Damaged leaves may provide some protection during subsequent cold events, plus green tissue is photosynthetic tissue. Even a completely dead leaf may provide some insulating protection, especially against a radiational freeze or frost. Once the palm has produced substantial new growth (2 to 3 new leaves), damaged leaf tissue can be removed. If trunk damage is observed, it is likely that there is substantial internal damage. These palms should be removed as they can pose a hazard.

All new leaves of a palm develop from the apical meristem (bud), so the primary tissue that needs to be protected is the apical meristem. Good fertilization practices, including routine applications of 8-2-12-4Mg (100% slow-release N, K and Mg), has been shown to greatly enhance cold tolerance.

Copper fungicides are recommended as an attempt (not a guarantee) to protect from secondary micro organisms that may attack damaged spear leaf tissue. Copper fungicides are recommended over all other groups of fungicides because they have broad activity against both bacteria and fungi. If the spear leaf does rot and can be easily pulled from the bud, it should be removed immediately, followed by a copper fungicide spray or drench of the bud region, which is now exposed. It is important to use a copper fungicide and **not** a copper nutrient solution.

Apply copper fungicides no more than twice because of the possibility of copper phytotoxicity. If it is believed that more chemical protection **of the bud** is needed after the copper fungicides have been applied, a broad-spectrum contact fungicide **may** be beneficial.

You will not know if your palm has survived until new growth emerges, which may be 4 to 7 months later. Hence, the need for patience! The new growth may be severely malformed or damaged, but the emergence of any living leaf tissue is a sign the palm is alive. Subsequent leaves will gradually improve in quality, but it may take as long as a year before normal leaves emerge. *Additional information on treating cold damaged palms is available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg318>.*



## Manatee County Extension Service News

Manatee County Extension Service is offering many commercial CEU programs this winter/spring. For agendas and registration information, follow the link <http://manateehort.ifas.ufl.edu/classes.htm> or call Peggy or Cindy at 941-722-4524. Pesticide license information questions may be directed to Jennifer Glassburn at 941-722-4524. There are also gardening and landscape classes for homeowners who can get information from the Calendar of Events at <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu>.

Check This Out!

**PREMIUM  
HORSE  
BEDDING**

LARGE SHAVINGS

100% PINE

2.75 CUBIC FEET,  
EXPANDS TO 8.0



**We have the perfect  
fertilizers for your  
application!**

12-2-14 All Purpose

8-2-12 Palms

17-2-17 Turf

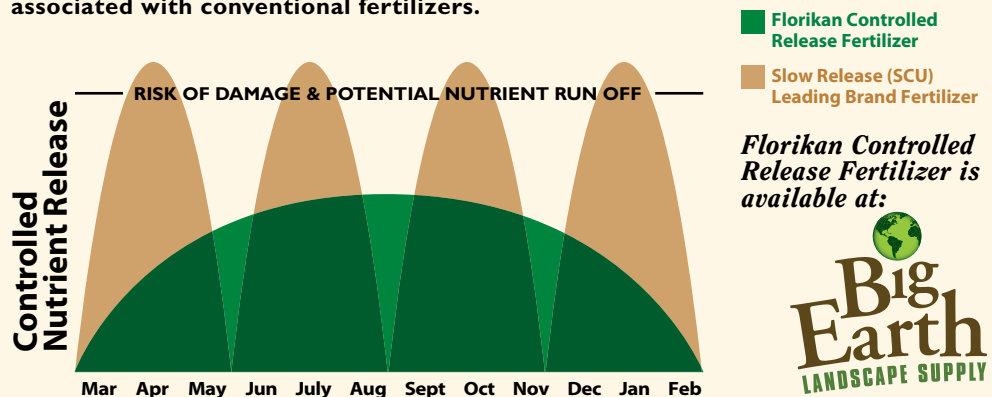
9-0-24 Zoysia Lawns



A beautiful landscape needs balanced plant food. Now is the time to fertilize your yard and landscape. Don't waste your time and energy with "bargain" priced fertilizers that are not formulated for our unique growing conditions. Big Earth's knowledgeable staff will help you select the fertilizer that meets your specific needs.

## Florikan Fertilizer... The Secret To Less Work, More Profits & Beautiful Landscapes

Plants and turf are healthier because they are receiving a consistent source of nutrition. Controlled release fertilizers prevent the feast and famine cycles that are associated with conventional fertilizers.





*Shade trees make good cents! Actually, they can save you many \$\$\$s. Deciduous trees can lower your air conditioning bill by 10% to 15% when planted on the west and south sides of your home. And since deciduous trees shed their leaves in the winter, you receive the benefit of the warm sun during the winter. Don't forget curb appeal! Besides improving the appearance, your home's value jumps 5% to 20% when landscaped with trees.*

## FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...

*Continued From Page 1*

and in bags," Rickert said.

Big Earth has grown from its storage facility in Palmetto to four locations covering Sarasota, Manatee & Hillsborough Counties. Each location is unique to its customers, yet consistent in the company's commitment to quality and service.

"The company is successful mainly due to the mindset that we *could* not fail," Warner said. "We would open the gates at 2:00 AM to make sure a shipment of product could be delivered, and we would make changes immediately to fill the demands of our customers. There was no exit strategy when we opened the business."

Rickert and Warner realized the company would survive after it had been profitable for the first three years and then made the move to the current Bradenton store location on 15th Street East. This enabled an expansion of inventory allowing Big Earth to offer more products to its customers.

Big Earth opened its next store six years later in Sarasota. The store relocated to the current Sarasota location on Bee Ridge Road five years after its opening.

Four years later in 2001, the Palmetto

**Yes! We Deliver.**

FLATBED WITH FORKLIFT  
OR DUMP TRUCK.

**No delivery too small or  
too big! Call for details.**

# Annual Spring Plant & Garden Festival

**March 20-21 • 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**

**Phone: 941-366-5731 • Email: [contactus@selby.org](mailto:contactus@selby.org)**

Special admission price \$8, members & their guests are admitted at no charge. Early admission for member's only on Saturday, March 20 at 9:00 a.m. This "Collector's Choice" plant fair will offer thousands of unique tropical plants from numerous vendors as well as select Selby Gardens plants for purchase. Explore great finds in The Garden Shop. Stroll the tropical beauty of the Gardens while enjoying unique horticulture displays & demonstrations on how to care for your plants. Last year's festival was a huge success, & we are excitedly putting plans into action for an even better event this year. Proceeds from the festival benefit Selby Gardens' programs of research, education & horticultural display.

location was opened. Then the newest addition in Tampa opened in August 2008, on Big Earth's 25th anniversary.

After realizing in 2009 the former company name "Wholesale Landscape Supply" was difficult for people to remember, too long, and never a name the owners truly loved, it was decided a change was necessary.

"The new name Big Earth Landscape Supply will broaden the opportunities for the company, enabling it to branch out in various directions as needed," Adam Rickert, CEO, said. "We are no longer boxed into just a wholesale, just a retail or just a landscape supply business by our name."

"Big Earth Landscape Supply helps us create a unique identity we were not able to achieve with our former name. Big Earth is memorable, easy to remember and will take us far as long as we never forget the importance of the customer," he said.

## GOT SKEETERS?

You can reduce mosquito breeding areas (especially as Spring approaches) by checking your property and eliminating areas which lead to standing water. Small puddles or pools of water make perfect mosquito breeding areas. Culprits include swimming pool covers, tarps or other covers, leaves in rain gutters and spouts, outdoor flowerpots and containers used for gardening and yard work, and old tires. Be sure to clean out your gutters from last Fall's leaves, put old tires in the garage or shed, and empty outdoor flowerpot containers to eliminate any standing water.



## PANTHER PROWL 5K RUN

**SATURDAY  
MARCH 20**



Registration Open  
@ 7:00 to 7:40 AM

**5K RACE BEGINS  
AT 8:00 AM**

GT Bray Park (Labor Day Course)

**941-302-4864**

[www.bcspanthers.org](http://www.bcspanthers.org)

[amberelizabeth2@hotmail.com](mailto:amberelizabeth2@hotmail.com)

## NEED SOD?

*By the piece or pallet... Call us!*

St. Augustine Palmetto  
St. Augustine Sapphire  
Empire Zoysia  
Celebration Bermuda  
St. Augustine Floratam  
St. Augustine Bitter Blue  
St. Augustine Seville  
Bermuda 419

*We also sell Bahia Sod by the pallet.*

## HOURS OF OPERATION

**7:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**Monday – Friday**

**8:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Saturday**

**CLOSED ON SUNDAYS**

## KIDS LOVE TO GARDEN!

Encourage your children and grandchildren to “get off the couch” and enjoy this healthy activity.



## HOW MUCH MULCH DO I NEED?

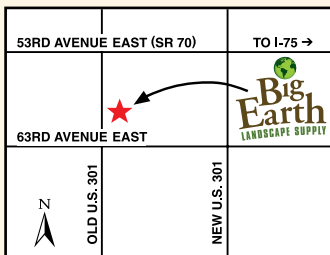
To figure out how much bulk product (i.e. mulch, gravel, soil and sand) you will need... Multiply the Length (feet) x Width (feet) x Inches (depth) and then divide by 327. This will tell you how many yards of material you will need. *Example... If you want to mulch a landscape bed measuring 10 feet long and 14 feet wide at a depth of 4 inches, the following equation would apply:  $10 \times 14 = 140 \times 4 = 560$  divided by  $327 = 1.7$  cubic feet of mulch.*

If you need any bulk items in quantities less than 1/2 cubic yard, please make certain that you bring in your recycle bin and shovel. We are not able to accurately measure small quantities with our loader buckets. The recycle bins issued by the county government equal 1/10 of a yard.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD the maker of heaven and earth.  
- Psalm 121:1-2*

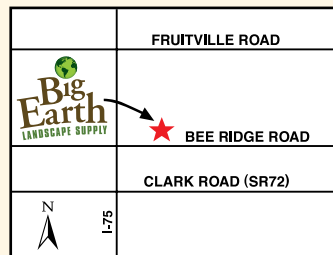
## FOUR CONVENIENT LOCATIONS...

### BRADENTON



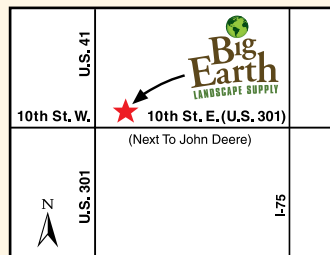
6001 15th Street East  
Bradenton, Florida 34203  
941/755-9299 • Fax 941/751-3790

### SARASOTA



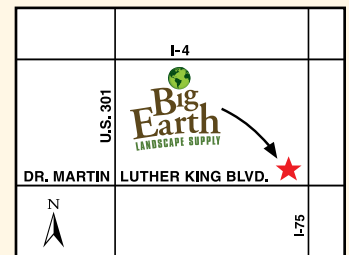
6625 Bee Ridge Road  
Sarasota, Florida 34241  
941/379-2440 • Fax 941/379-0634

### PALMETTO



1010 10th Street East (U.S. 301)  
Palmetto, Florida 34221  
941/729-5655 • Fax 941/721-4751

### TAMPA



9502 E. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Tampa, Florida 33610  
813/626-3270 • Fax 813/621-8300

## Letter From The Owner...

Well, what do you think of our name change from Wholesale Landscape Supply to Big Earth Landscape Supply? I really like it! This wasn't the first name change, though you probably didn't know that. When Raymond Warner and I started the business in August of 1983, we originally named it Wholesale Landscape Specialties. After using that name for a few months, we decided it didn't properly represent who we are. That's when we changed it to Wholesale Landscape Supply. I wish we would have thought of Big Earth back then. Regardless of what our name is, the fact that you can get excellent service and choose from a huge inventory of products has not changed. Come to think of it, the success of our company isn't because of our name but because of you, our wonderful customers. We thank you wholeheartedly for your patronage and loyalty to us all these years.

*- Al Rickert, Owner*

Add natural beauty to your landscape with our Tennessee Boulders... sold by the pound.

**AND REMEMBER, WE DELIVER!**



2423 Manatee Ave. W., Bradenton, FL 34205

[WWW.BIGEARTHSUPPLY.COM](http://WWW.BIGEARTHSUPPLY.COM)

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