

Success of New "Coastal Roots" program Aids Marsh Maneuvers

In 1999, Dr. Pam Borne-Blanchard of the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program initiated the "Coastal Roots" Seedling Nursery Program for junior high and high schools in coastal Louisiana. The overall goal of the Coastal Roots Seedling Nursery Program is to assist students in developing an attitude of stewardship toward our natural resources and to provide for them a constructive active learning situation in which they can explore strategies for sustaining our coastal ecosystems.

Specific objectives of the program include: 1) providing junior high and high school students with background information on wetlands issues, focusing on wetland loss as well as wetland restoration and conservation; 2) constructing nurseries on school grounds where students grow native Louisiana wetland plants (southern bald cypress, southern wax myrtle and black mangrove); and 3) Producing wetland plants that can be used by the students in a hands-on restoration program.

With help from with David Bourgeois (LSU AgCenter and La Sea Grant Marine Advisory Agent) and Dr. Ed Bush (LSU Horticulture professor), the Coastal Roots program has been instituted at schools in 9 parishes across coastal Louisiana. These nurseries are funded by three primary sources: the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana through funding from the NOAA Restoration Center's Community-Based Restoration Program. Coastal Roots was also recently selected to receive additional funding under the Coastal Impact Assistance Program administered through the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.



High school students in nine coastal parishes have established "Coastal Roots" seedling nursery programs in which black mangrove, wax myrtle, and bald cypress seedlings are grown for coastal restoration projects.