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Sarasota Herald-Tribune (FL){PUBLICATION2}

Green event for a better environment

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Harold Bubil

So you have an older home and you want to make it more energy efficient. Where do you turn for information?

The Florida House Learning Center, right? How about Marie **Selby** Botanical Gardens? That's right. Many homeowners call **Selby** when they want information on green building and landscaping -- must be all that greenery around the world-famous botanical garden on Sarasota's bayfront.

Next Friday, though, **Selby** will be the green resource of choice when it hosts a one-day seminar in conjunction with a company called MyGreenBuildings, a new Sarasota firm that specializes in the "greening" of older structures. Called "Make It Green," the seminar will feature presentations by such local experts as Drew Smith of Two Trails Inc. and **Matt Ross of Eco-Smart**. At the end of the day, I will moderate a panel discussion that sums it all up, with questions from the audience.

"The purpose of the seminar is to define for people what 'green' is," said Steve Ellis of MyGreenBuildings. "We're going to talk about products and systems that are available locally. I'll talk about how you incorporate these products and systems and techniques into building a home. "People ask what a green house looks like. It doesn't look any different from any other house. The difference is what goes on in the design and the products that you put into it," said Ellis. The seminar is the brainchild of Donna Krabill, **Selby's** director of environmental education, who saw an article in the Herald-Tribune about MyGreenBuildings and called Ellis, who, conveniently, has a background in producing seminars.

"She really wanted to take advantage of how hot a topic this is," said Ellis, "and do something for the community to provide a way to learn more about building green."

"One of the things that's ironic is **Selby** gets an awful lot of calls from people in the community when they have questions about ... the green-building phenomenon. That's the first place they think of."

Speakers and their topics: David Benzing, **Selby** Gardens, defining "green"; Laurel Schiller, Florida Native Plant Nursery, smart landscaping; Drew Smith, Two Trails, green standards; Barron Schimberg, ALA, The Schimberg Group, green design; Matt Ross, Eco-Smart, products and resources; Mary Anne Bowie, Sarasota Green Connection, products and resources; Steve Ellis, MyGreenBuildings, green homes; Tim Ramage, Ringling School of Art and Design, green roofs; Joe Barbetta, Sarasota County Commission, county initiatives.

"We hope to see a lot of homeowners that are interested in learning what a green home is and what they can do immediately to incorporate these (green) elements," said Ellis. "We want this to be a practical guide so people can ... live in a more green way."

The seminar begins at 8:50 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25, with lunch an additional \$10; the ticket includes a free return admission to **Selby**, worth \$12. To register, call 366-5731, ext. 239.

At 8 p.m. Thursday, Ramage will speak on "Green Roofs and Living Walls" at **Selby**, 811 S. Palm Ave.

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