

# Oyster Gardening

After the article in last month's newsletter about the Health of the Indian River Lagoon, several people have asked for more details on Oyster Gardening.

**Why Oysters?** Oysters are considered a keystone species in the IRL, meaning they hold a vital role in keeping the ecosystem balanced. They are a source for food and provide habitat for other species, help prevent erosion and *they filter feed*. And that's where we come in...

**What is Oyster Gardening:** Oysters are placed into oysters mats that have been built by volunteers. The mats are hung into the water from the volunteer's docks where they monitor/clean the habitat. The oysters reproduce within the mat and continuously filter the water.



**Why Oyster Gardening:** Oysters can filter out particles, such as algae and muck, at an astonishing rate. One oyster alone filters about 50 gallons per day!

## **Who qualifies for Oyster Gardening:**

- Has a dock
- Can commit 1-2 hours of time per week to cleaning and monitoring habitats and entering findings into a database
- Not planning to be out of town for more than 2 weeks over the 6-7 months (unless you schedule someone to help while you are gone)
- Can lift 30 lbs

## **What duties are involved:**

- Attend the 2-hour workshop to learn details of the program and build your mat
- Hang the mat from your dock
- Monitor/clean the oyster mat and enter findings into an online database

**Getting Involved:** First, sign up for your workshop at [this link: http://brevardoysterrestoration.us2.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5cdabbc92252657845ee374eb&id=71a749b606](http://brevardoysterrestoration.us2.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5cdabbc92252657845ee374eb&id=71a749b606) or call 321-254-9453 ext 284.

You will be contacted for available 2-hour workshops where you learn the details of the program and build your own oyster mat. They supply everything, you just show up. Then in September, you will receive oyster shells covered with live spat (juvenile oysters) which you will place into the habitat that you made. Then you hang it from your dock and can begin the care and data collection process.

**When:** The workshops run in the summer of 2016 (exact dates tbd). You receive the oysters in September.



**Another Option:** If you don't think you can commit to the Oyster Gardening, you can help out by making and/or deploying the mats. There are several workshops for this listed at: <http://brevardoystergardens.org/help-make-oyster-mats/> Or call 321.254-9453 Ext 377.

**Why get involved?** By now, everyone knows the critical condition of our IRL. While other large projects are in the process, this is something that we can individually do now to get involved and make an impact. This program relies solely on volunteers living along the shores of the IRL who agree to help. That's us. I hope you join me and other neighbors in this venture.

