

# CARES Recipient Profile

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**Farm:** Tampa Wholesale Nursery

**Location:** Dover, Hillsborough County

**Date of Origination:** 1961

**Commodities:** shade trees, ground covering, plants

Fifty years ago, Roy Davis grew a small plant business for landscape jobs from a city lot in Tampa to a wholesale nursery that distributes 300,000 plants throughout the Southeast.



As with many agricultural operations, water is the lifeblood of Tampa Wholesale Nursery. The nursery takes great steps in conserving this valuable resource. It was one of the first nurseries to incorporate low-volume irrigation, greatly reducing water usage. Where overhead spraying is still used, the beds are gently domed so that any excess water is collected in gutters that surround them. From the gutters, water flows into a ditch that channels it to a two acre reservoir where it is again pumped to water the plants.

Water in Tampa Wholesale Nursery's reservoir comes primarily from its daily allotment of groundwater, as well as collected rainwater and irrigation runoff. But 80,000 gallons of water a day comes from a unique partnership with Tampa Bay Fisheries. Once water leaves the seafood processing plant it goes through a screening process before going into Tampa Bay Fisheries' wastewater treatment plant. From there it flows into a treatment pond where it is held until it is pumped through a mile-long pipeline into Tampa Wholesale Nursery's two acre reservoir. Since implementing the new process, the amount of water Tampa Wholesale Nurseries draws from the aquifer has decreased by 40%.

Tampa Wholesale Nursery's efforts to recycle go beyond utilizing wastewater and collecting runoff. Damaged concrete lintels from a local manufacturer are used as the gutters that edge the beds and serve as posts for frost protection.

Tampa Wholesale Nursery incorporates Best Management Practices throughout the operation, including Integrated Pest Management. The nursery's reservoir attracts wildlife and also provides wildlife rehabilitation for more than a 100 animals annually.

When asked why he is a farmer who CARES, Davis said "We enjoy being able to do the right things for the environment and for our ground. Being good stewards is just all part of keeping nature around and being involved in keeping the environment healthy."

Source: FreshFromFlorida.com – 2007