

## ***Joint Program for Cane Toad Removal***

### ***Flow Way CDD and the Esplanade Master Association***

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The District and the Master Association are joining together in a program to collect cane toads. The District will institute a program to collect tadpoles from the water management system in the evening hours, and the Master HOA using traps, collect adult Cane Toads that make it to land.

We have retained the firm of Wild Things Exterminator's for the Cane Toad Removal program. Residents will see this firm on-site, including evening hours during the collection process.

#### ***Background:***

Cane Toads are native to South and Central America, are well known for their invasion of Australia, and have been introduced to the Southern part of Florida beginning in the 1930's as a method of biological pest control to eat beetles threatening the sugar cane crop. That original population of cane toads did not survive, however in the 1950's a pet importer released about 100 cane toads at the Miami Airport and over the years, other incidents of releases of Cane Toads continued in South Florida, and the population now reaches as far north as Tampa.

Cane toads are found in greater densities in developed communities across the State, especially in communities with fresh water lakes. They are common in yards, open spaces, golf courses and similar habitats in Florida, with thousands of the eggs hatching in the water management system, and the adults then moving to land. They do not climb well, so wherever they live, they typically stay at or near ground level.

Their breeding season is between March and September with females laying between 8,000 and 35,000 eggs at a time, which causes their populations to explode during the summer. This means that even if you catch and kill 99% of adult toads in the area, the few left can produce so many offspring, that before you know it you are back to where you started.

These toads are nocturnal, remain hidden during the day and come out around dusk. They are a significant nuisance to people and are potentially lethal to pets that attack the ground dwelling toads.

Generally, cane toads can be differentiated by stout bodies with short legs, slightly webbed rear feet, dry and warty skin. Their poison glands are on their shoulders and vary in shades of gray, brown and black. Adults measure between three and six inches long, and some reach eight or nine inches. Baby cane toads are the size of raisins, easily confused with native toads.

Cane toads are incredibly prolific breeders and females can deposit 8,000-30,000 eggs once or twice per year. Breeding usually follows heavy rain, and require two weeks to two month to develop into toadlets.

These toads out-compete native species, and can be extremely dangerous

Cane toads are commonly found in yards and our water management system in the Community. To treat cane toads, the District and the Master HOA have joined together to implement a program that is for both tadpoles in the water management system and grown toads that are in yards.

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Some Tips:

- Reinforce the bottom of any fencing, and repair any openings.
- Keep your grass short and clear any debris from your yard so cane toads have fewer places to hide during the day.
- Do not leave pet food and water bowls out overnight, cane toads will eat your pet's food and bathe in your pet's water.
- Cane toads are attracted to the proteins in dog droppings, so pick up right away.
- Turn off outdoor lights at night, they attract bugs, which attract Cane Toads.



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#### ***Treatment of Cane Toads:***

Tadpoles and larvae are top priority. Most tadpole removal will be accomplished during the afternoon or night hours, depending on their stage of growth. The older they are, the closer to shore they are.

To start the process, we begin by skimming the tadpoles and eggs from the water management system. Females laying thousands of eggs at a time, we will be removing tadpoles, which is a crucial component to cane toad control, and we can remove several thousand tadpoles in a few hours. On land we will use a mixture of vinegar, lemon and water which stuns the cane toad, they are then removed and humanly euthanized.

Controlling Cane Toads and even removing the larvae strands in earlier stages can significantly reduce their population. Strands will be removed from the water and can severely limit the population. They can be up to 60' long and are difficult to see in areas with more grasses.

When baby toads do reach the shore, they are sprayed with a natural solution. That way we can get them when they go into the grasses where it would be difficult to capture them. Hundreds of them can be removed this way in a short period of time.

Actual cane toad removal takes place at night with a green light. While adult removal is important, the numbers are much higher in the tadpole stage.

This is the normal process for cane toad removal. Seasons fluctuate with weather and rains. The goal is to keep them from reaching the shore and spreading. It is believed that many of the cane toads arrived on our coast in landscaping from Miami. They originate from the sugar cane fields in and spread out from there.

The CDD and HOA's vendor, we will spend roughly 6-8 hours a week to eliminate the tadpole population.