Naples Botanical Garden helps
Southwest Florida downshift
by getting back to nature

Sebastian Saltta
Blue Zones Project – Southwest Florida

Research shows that spending time among trees and in nature is good for your health. In fact, a 2019 research article in Scientific Reports states that living in greener urban areas is associated with lower probabilities of cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, asthma hospitalization, and ultimately, mortality, among adults.

Studies also show that nature has a large impact on our emotional well-being. In one study in Mind, 95% of those interviewed said their mood improved after spending time outside, changing from depressed, stressed, and anxious to relaxed and more balanced.

Now, more than ever, exposure to safe, nearby nature for well-being should be prioritized. Naples Botanical Garden, a Blue Zones Project approved worksite, and 170-acre, world-class Naples Botanical Garden, visit naplesgarden.org/communi-

A Southwest Florida youth helps her family find the perfect tree at the Naples Botanical Garden Tree Giveaway.

“Time spent in nature grounds us and pro-
vides a feeling to navigate unsettling times,” says Kara Laufer, director of community rela-
tions at Naples Botanical Garden.

“The Garden is a safe place to connect with the natural world and in July, we began a pro-
gram to extend complimentary visits through the end of the year to our community’s frontline and essential workers, and their families.”

With the rise in substance abuse and mental health needs during the pandemic, the Garden has taken their outreach a step farther to not only help those suffering from mental illness, but also those working hard to support and care for them. They recently provided complimentary access to staff and clients of David Lawre-

The Community Foundation of Collier County asked us to help spread the word about the Blue Zones Project – Southwest Florida, or you can email us at bluezonesprojectswfl@sharecare.com to be entered in our prize drawing for a gift card from Blue Zones Project Southwestern Florida, visit southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com.

On-line ‘Forest Bathing’ initiative

In Japan, people practice something called forest bathing, or shinrin-yoku. Shinrin in Japa-
nese means “forest,” and yoku means “bath.” Forest bathing has nothing to do with exercise, but rather has to do with simply surrounding yourself in nature and experience the sights, sounds, and smells.

This week we want to encourage you to spend some time in nature. It could be at our beaches, in your back yard, or at the many parks and trails in our community. Take time to truly be still and really experience your senses. What did you hear? Did it make you more relaxed and less anxious?

Share your experience with us by comment-
ing or by tagging us on Facebook @Blue Zones Project – Southwest Florida, or you can email us at bluezonesprojectswfl@sharecare.com to be entered in our prize drawing for a gift card from one of our Blue Zones Project Approved Restau-

Sebastian Saltta works for Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida.