



## Florida-Friendly Landscaping

### Watershed Protection Begins in the Yard

Fertilizers and pesticides used on residential and commercial landscapes are a significant source of pollution in Florida's waterways. Improperly applied, fertilizers can be washed by rainstorms into local streams and lakes leading to algae growth that kills fish and makes lakes and rivers unswimmable. Watering of residential landscaping also accounts for the largest single use of water from municipal water supplies.

You can have a great looking yard and also help protect your watershed. The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program at the University of Florida and Florida Department of Environmental Protection promote nine basic principles to achieve a low-impact landscape that won't harm our water resources.

- 1) Right Plant, Right Place:** Select native and "Florida-friendly" plants suited for your landscape that will require minimal amounts of water, fertilizers and pesticides. Restrict the size of your lawn to minimize fertilizer use and irrigation needs.
- 2) Water Efficiently:** Irrigate only when your lawn needs water. Efficient watering is the key to a healthy Florida yard and conservation of limited resources. Follow local watering restrictions carefully.
- 3) Fertilize Appropriately:** Less is often best. Overuse of fertilizers is hazardous to your yard and the environment.
- 4) Mulch:** Maintain a 3-inch layer of mulch to retain soil moisture, prevent erosion and suppress weeds.
- 5) Attract wildlife:** Use plants in your yard that provide food, water and shelter will attract Florida's diverse wildlife including birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.
- 6) Manage yard pests responsibly:** Avoid or minimize use of pesticides that can harm people, pets, beneficial organisms and the environment.
- 7) Recycle:** Leave your grass clippings on the lawn and compost leaves and other yard wastes. These materials provide nutrients to the soil and reduce waste disposal when reused.
- 8) Reduce stormwater runoff:** Water running off your landscape can carry pollutants such as soil, debris, fertilizer, gasoline and pesticides that can adversely impact water quality. Reduce runoff from your yard to prevent pollutants from entering our lakes and rivers.
- 9) Protect the waterfront:** Waterfront property, whether on a river, stream, pond, bay or beach, is very fragile. Maintain a natural buffer between your lawn and the water. Never allow fertilizers or pesticides to enter the water from your property.

For more information about having a beautiful, environmentally safe landscape, consult these resources:

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[www.FloridaYards.org](http://www.FloridaYards.org)

#### Florida's Water: Ours to Protect

[www.ProtectingOurWater.org](http://www.ProtectingOurWater.org)

#### Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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