


 splash!

quick facts on...

Florida-Friendly Landscaping:

How to Save Water through Water-Smart Planting

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply.



Seagrape

Did you know that half of all potable (drinking) water in South Florida is used for outdoor irrigation? You can cut outdoor water use substantially by installing water-conserving plants and applying Florida-friendly landscaping principles in your outdoor spaces.

Florida-friendly landscaping conserves water and protects the environment through the use of native and drought-tolerant landscaping, with proper maintenance and water-wise irrigation. Follow the nine principles of Florida-friendly landscaping, and you'll be well on your way to saving water and enjoying your beautiful Florida yard!

1. Right Plant, Right Place. Almost any plant will survive in your landscape if you plant it in the right place. You can drastically reduce the need for water, fertilizer, pesticides and pruning if you choose and group plants according to their water and sunlight needs, as well as the type of soil, sunlight exposure and water conditions of your planting sites. Be sure to also remove invasive exotic plants that may steal water and nutrients from your Florida-friendly plants.

2. Water Efficiently. Efficient watering will not only help you save money and conserve water, it can also create a healthier landscape. Avoid overwatering, use micro-irrigation, and water your lawn and plants only when you know they need it or when they show signs of stress.

3. Fertilize Appropriately. Plants, animals and people depend on clean water for survival. When too much fertilizer is applied to landscapes, it seeps past the root zone of the grass, plants or trees and into the aquifer or runs off into water bodies. Avoid weed-and-seed products, use slow-release fertilizers, and fertilize lawns, trees and plants only to maintain health. Fertilizer will not help poor growth caused by poor plant placement, disease or pests.

4. Mulch. Keeping 2 to 3 inches of mulch on your plant beds helps control weeds, retain soil moisture and reduce erosion and stormwater runoff. Cut down on mowing by replacing grass with mulch in areas that are shaded or difficult to mow.

5. Attract Wildlife. Friendly visitors, like butterflies and beneficial insects, will enjoy your landscape if you provide food, water and cover. Plant vines, shrubs and trees to create cover, nesting areas and food. Protect your visitors by limiting pesticide use or by spot-treating only the areas that need attention.

6. Manage Yard Pests Responsibly. When it comes to pest management, nature takes care of itself! Misused pesticides in your yard can run off into waterways and harm beneficial insects. Learn to identify beneficial insects and let them do the work for you. If pesticides are needed, choose the least-toxic pesticides, such as horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps and *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT). Remember, low levels of pests will do minimal damage, so be tolerant!

7. Recycle. Recycling your yard waste back onto your lawn and landscape can improve the fertility and water-holding ability of the soil and help aerate soil that has become compacted. There's no need to bag or rake lawn clippings; leave them on the lawn to recycle nitrogen. Use fallen leaves and pine needles as mulch under trees and shrubs.

8. Reduce Stormwater Runoff. Stormwater runoff can carry pollutants, pesticides and excess fertilizers into bays, rivers and lakes. Remember that what goes in your storm drain can find its way into our water sources. Pick up pet waste to help reduce bacterial and nutrient pollution. Remove trash from street gutters before it gets washed into storm drains. And use swales (low areas) to hold and filter water.

9. Protect the Waterfront. Bays and waterways contribute to the quality of life in Florida. Waterfront owners can help protect these fragile natural treasures by removing invasive aquatic plants and establishing a 10-30 foot "no fertilizer, no pesticide" zone along their shoreline. Never prune mangroves or remove any vegetation without first seeking proper permits and guidelines.

Plants for Your Florida-Friendly Landscape

Florida-friendly landscaping is vibrant, alive and colorful. Many lush and tropical-looking plants are among the list of native or drought-tolerant plants appropriate for South Florida's unique climate, with some listed here. They will add to the beauty of your landscape while conserving water. Consult your nursery professional for information on which of these plants are appropriate for your region.

Trees

- Bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)
- Black ironwood (*Krugiodendron ferreum*)
- Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*)
- Dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine*)
- Geiger tree (*Cordia sebestena*)
- Gumbo Limbo (*Bursera simaruba*)
- Live oak (*Quercus virginiana*)
- Paradise tree (*Simarouba glauca*)
- Pigeon plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*)
- Pond apple (*Annona glabra*)
- Red bay (*Persea borbonia*)
- Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)
- Seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera*)
- Simpson's stopper (*Myricanthes fragrans*)
- Slash pine (*Pinus elliotii*)
- Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
- Southern red cedar (*Juniperus silicicola*)
- Sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*)
- Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



Sweetbay magnolia

Shrubs

- Bay Cedar (*Suriana maritima*)
- Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)
- Coral bean (*Erythrina herbacea*)
- Firebush (*Hamelia patens*)
- Florida privet (*Forestiera segregata*)
- Florida gamagrass (*Tripsacum floridanum*)
- Inkberry (*Scaevola plumieri*)
- Jamaican caper (*Capparis cyanophallophora*)
- Marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*)
- Swamp mallow (*Hibiscus coccineus*)
- Walter's viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*)
- Wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*)
- White indigo berry (*Randia aculeata*)
- Wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*)
- Wild olive (*Osmanthus americanus*)
- Yellow anise (*Illicium parviflorum*)

Palms and Cycads

- Buccaneer palm (*Pseudophoenix sargentii*)
- Cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*)
- Dwarf palmetto (*Sabal minor*)
- Florida thatch palm (*Thrinax radiata*)
- Florida royal palm (*Roystonea elata*)
- Needle palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*)
- Paurotis/Everglades palm (*Acoelorrhapha wrightii*)
- Queen sago (*Cycas circinalis*)
- Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)



Buccaneer Palm

Accent Grasses, Vines and Groundcovers

- Blue Jacquemontia (*Jacquemontia pentanθος*)
- Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spectabilis*)
- Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)
- Corky-stemmed passion-flower (*Passiflora suberosa*)
- Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*)
- Passion-flower (*Passiflora incarnata*)
- Mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*)
- Purple love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)
- Railroad vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*)
- Trailing Lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*)
- Trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*)
- Yellow Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

Annuals/Perennials/Wildflowers

- Beach sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*)
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Blanket flower (*Gaillardia pulchella*)
- Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- Green eyes (*Berlandiera subcaulis*)
- Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- Rain lily (*Zephyranthes atamasco*)
- Shrub verbena (*Lantana depressa*)
- Sea oxeye daisy (*Borrchia frutescens*)
- Stokes Aster (*Stokesia laevis*)
- Tropical red sage (*Salvia coccinea*)
- Tickseed (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*)
- Virginia Iris (*Iris virginica*)



Blanket flower

Florida-friendly landscaping saves time, money, water and our environment! For more information, go to www.savewaterfl.com.

The University of Florida established these nine Florida-friendly landscaping principles to guide Florida Yards & Neighborhoods programs offered through county Extension Service offices.



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 305-453-1275
 Lower West Coast
 239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201

Martin/St. Lucie
 772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100
 Miami-Dade
 305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300
 Okeechobee
 863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200
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