

## Protect Florida's Natural Resources

.....for generations to come.

The natural beauty of Florida continues to attract many people—some to visit and to stay as residents. From the sandy coasts that encircle our state to the inland forests and prairies that contain lakes, rivers and streams, we use and enjoy Florida's natural resources for outdoor activities such as boating, fishing, hiking and camping.

Florida's rapid population growth brings demanding challenges. Some of the natural environment that attracted us in the first place is damaged and dwindling at an unprecedented rate.

As our communities have grown, there has been a tremendous pressure placed upon water resources. An amazing natural system of recharge areas and springs links the above and below ground water sources (aquifers) that sustain Florida's vital ecosystems—and provide us with water.

In the past, we have not been as careful as we should have been in order to protect the natural beauty of Florida for future generations.



## Our Yards and Community Landscapes

*The first line of defense.*

The good news is that we are learning from our past mistakes. Today we realize that we can take important steps to prevent further destruction of Florida's natural resources and to rebuild the state's valuable ecosystems.

Whether we take care of our own yard or contract a professional service, we can play an important role in minimizing the potentially harmful effects of urbanization on our natural resources.



### How landscaping and maintenance practices fit into the picture...

During Florida's rainstorms, water rushes over the land, carrying debris and dissolved nutrients to natural or man-made waterways. The water with its contents is called stormwater runoff.

Fertilizers and chemicals we add to our landscapes are washed away by rain or excessive irrigation into storm drains or down through the soil into the aquifer. Oil and residue on roads, driveways and parking areas also end up in waterways through this route. The water from the storm drains flows into ponds, rivers, lakes and bays, causing pollution problems for the natural environment.



## Take the First Step!

*Help is just a phone call away.*

Every year, thousands of people turn to their UF/IFAS Extension office for information, instruction and advice from specially-trained county horticulture staff and Master Gardener volunteers. UF/IFAS Extension can show you ways to design and maintain a yard that uses less water, fertilizer and pesticides.

*Florida Yards & Neighborhoods* is a public education and outreach program available through many UF/IFAS Extension offices. To find out more about this program or other Florida-friendly approaches to an attractive, healthy landscape, call the number of the statewide office on the back of this brochure, or visit our website at:

**SolutionsForYourLife.com/fyn**

and our companion website at:  
**www.FloridaYards.org**



## Florida Yards & Neighborhoods

*Florida-friendly landscaping emphasizes nine major principles:*

### Right Plant, Right Place

Plants selected to suit a specific site will require minimal amounts of water, fertilizer and pesticides.

### Water Efficiently

Irrigate only when your lawn and landscape need water. Efficient watering is the key to a healthy Florida-Friendly Yard and conservation of limited resources.

### Fertilize Appropriately

Less is often best. Over-utilization of fertilizers can be hazardous to your yard and the environment.

### Mulch

Maintaining a 3" layer of mulch will help retain soil moisture, prevent erosion, and suppress weeds.

### Attract Wildlife

Plants in your yard that provide food, water and shelter can conserve Florida's diverse wildlife.

### Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

Unwise use of pesticides can harm people, pets, beneficial organisms and the environment.

### Recycle

Grass clippings, leaves and yard trimmings recycled on site provide nutrients to the soil and reduce waste disposal.

### Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Water running off your yard can carry pollutants such as soil, debris, fertilizer and pesticides that can adversely impact water quality. Reduction of this runoff will help prevent nonpoint source pollution.

### Protect the Waterfront

Waterfront property, whether on a bay, river, stream, pond or beach, is very fragile and should be carefully protected to maintain freshwater and marine ecosystems.

To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive, healthy landscapes that protect Florida's natural resources, contact:



# Florida Friendly Landscaping



Visit our statewide website at:

**SolutionsForYourLife.com/fyn**

And the FDEP companion site at:

**www.FloridaYards.org**

Or contact the statewide office at  
(352) 392-1831 ext. 220

**E-mail: [fyn@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:fyn@ifas.ufl.edu)**

The Cooperative Extension Service is a partnership between the University of Florida and your local county government.

Creating and maintaining attractive landscapes to enhance our community and to protect Florida's natural environment.



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IFAS Extension

This brochure was funded in part by a Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program Implementation grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a contract with the Nonpoint Source Management Section of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

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