



Land Clearing Resources

- 1. Receive a list of local training & educational opportunities** in Indian River County's free electronic monthly stormwater newsletter, *Turning the Tide*. To begin receiving the newsletter, email your contact information to the Indian River Stormwater Education Coordinator at dwilson@ircgov.com .
- 2. Educational webcasts regarding erosion and sediment controls are available** at <http://escn.tv/video/escn-may-26th-2010> . This bi-weekly webcast provides up to date coverage to the Erosion and Sediment industry, interviews with industry experts, and a library of informative videos.
- 3. When hiring a landscape maintenance, pest control or irrigation professional**, select those professionals who have earned the UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping Certification in environmentally safe landscaping practices. As a convenience to you, the UF Extension Office maintains a list of professionals who have accomplished the requirements to become certified in Green Industry Best Management Practices http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/professionals/certification_lists/cert_county_name.shtml. *Remember, water quality and environmental protection begins in your yard.*
- 4. Tips on erosion and sediment control techniques and permit contact information** are available on the County's stormwater web page at <http://www.ircgov.com/Departments/Public Works/Stormwater Section/Index.htm>
- 5. Before planting..... Become familiar** with the nine principles of creating a Florida-Friendly Yard which will help you save time, money and resources. The principles are available at www.floridayards.org and are listed on attached pages for quick reference.

Join your IRC neighbors in treating water as a *resource*, not as a waste product or garbage receptacle,

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1. [Right Plant, Right Place](#)

Achieving a healthy, low-maintenance home landscape starts with putting the right plant in the right place. Select [plants](#) that match a site's soil, light, water, and climatic conditions. Buy quality plants that welcome wildlife, consider plant size when you make your purchase, and aim for a diversity of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and flowers. Once these plants are established, they'll require little—if any—supplemental water, fertilizer, or pesticides, saving you time and money. Help stop the spread of [invasive plants](#) by removing them from your yard—see the [IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas](#).

2. [Water Efficiently](#)

Choosing the right plant for the right place goes a long way towards conserving water. So does grouping plants with similar water needs together and zoning your irrigation system appropriately. Watch for signs of wilt before you irrigate, be a weather watcher (don't irrigate if it's going to rain), and water early in the morning if you can, following any restrictions in your area. Hand water when possible, using a watering can, pail, or hose. Check your irrigation system regularly; repair any leaks, clogs, or breaks; and make sure all sprinklers are irrigating your plants, not the sidewalk. Florida law requires a working rain shut-off device or switch on any automatic irrigation system installed after May 1, 1991 (FS 373.662). But even if your irrigation system is older, you can still inexpensively add a rain or soil moisture sensor. Calibrate your irrigation system (see [Saving Water Using Your Irrigation System](#)) for maximum efficiency. Mulch and mow properly to increase plant health and drought tolerance, and use micro-irrigation wherever possible. A rain barrel (see [Capturing Water with Rain Barrels](#)) is a great way to save water and money.

3. [Fertilize Appropriately](#)

Fertilize according to UF/IFAS recommended rates and application timings to prevent leaching—fertilizer leaking down through the soil rather than being absorbed by plant roots. Look for fertilizers with slow-release nitrogen and little or no phosphorous. Never fertilize within 10 feet of any water body, and don't fertilize before a heavy rain. If you spill fertilizer on the lawn or on a sidewalk or driveway, sweep it up and put it back in the bag. For a quick summer green-up, use iron supplements (ferrous sulfate or chelated iron) on your turf instead of nitrogen fertilizer. Avoid “weed and feed” products that contain both fertilizers and herbicides, as these can damage some plants. Always follow the fertilizer label directions. If you use reclaimed water for irrigation, be aware that it does contain some nutrients and adjust the amount of fertilizer accordingly.

4. [Mulch](#)

Mulch helps retain soil moisture, protects plants, and inhibits weed growth. It gives your landscape a neat, uniform appearance and is a great Florida-Friendly choice for hard-to-mow slopes and shady spots. Keep a 2- to 3-inch-deep layer of mulch on plant beds. Always leave at least 2 inches of space

around tree trunks to prevent rot. Create self-mulching areas under your trees by letting fallen leaves lie. Be sure to choose sustainably harvested mulch like melaleuca, pine straw, or eucalyptus. The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program does not recommend the use of cypress mulch, as its origins may be difficult to determine.

5. [Attract Wildlife](#)

Animals have trouble living in today's heavily urbanized landscape. By providing food, water, and shelter for birds, butterflies, bats, and others, you can help these displaced Floridians while bringing beauty and benefits to your home landscape. Select plants with seeds, fruit, foliage, flowers, or berries that animals can eat. Supply water, such as a rain garden or bird bath. Leave snags (dead trees), if they do not create a hazard, for birds to perch and nest in. Increase vertical layering to provide more cover and feeding for wild critters. Build a small bat house, or plant host plants for butterflies, to attract these Floridian friends to your yard. Reducing insecticide use can be good for you and many animals and beneficial insects. They eat pests and help pollinate your flowers!

6. [Manage Yard Pests Responsibly](#)

Concerns for human and environmental health have led scientists to recommend Integrated Pest Management ([IPM](#)), a strategy that helps gardeners manage pests with as few chemicals as possible. To prevent disease and insect outbreaks, select pest-resistant plants and put them in suitable locations. Use appropriate amounts of water and fertilizer, and mow grass at its proper height. When problems do arise, remove the affected leaves or plant parts, or pick the insects off by hand. Don't treat by default—some of the insects you see may be beneficial, actually helping to control pest insect populations. Spot-treat only, rather than blanket spraying, and use selective rather than broad-spectrum insecticides. Always read and follow insecticide label instructions. With these and other IPM techniques, you can create and sustain a low-maintenance, cost-efficient, healthy landscape that uses as few chemicals as possible—for your family's health and the health of the environment.

7. [Recycle Yard Waste](#)

Landscape maintenance activities like mowing, pruning, and raking generate yard waste that you can recycle to save money. Decomposed organic matter, like pruned branches or grass clippings, releases nutrients back to the soil in a form that plants can easily use. Try composting, combining "green" (nitrogen-rich) and "brown" (carbon-rich) materials, such as grass clippings, weeds, plant trimmings, egg shells, coffee grounds, tea bags, twigs and branches, pine needles, corncobs, and shredded cardboard. Turn or stir the pile as you build it, and add water so microorganisms can break down the material, but make sure you cover the pile to protect it from rain. Add this nutrient-rich mixture to your soil and enjoy the benefits: looser soil with greater water-holding capacity and increased fertility—not to mention less garbage going to the landfill!

8. Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Florida's waterways are vulnerable to everything we put on our home landscapes. Fertilizers and pesticides can leach through the soil or run off into storm drains. Along with landscape debris and eroded soil, these can wreak havoc on our water quality and the fragile ecosystems our water resources support. Florida-Friendly Landscaping seeks to retain and use as much of the rainfall and irrigation water that lands on our home landscapes as possible. Creating shallow rain gardens, or shaping the earth on slopes with berms (rises) and swales (dips), can help slow runoff from heavy rains and allow the water time to soak into the ground. Make sure your downspout is pointed into the garden, not towards a sidewalk or driveway. Wherever possible, maintain permeable walkways, driveways, and patios of brick, gravel, earth, or crushed shell, to allow rain to soak into the ground.

9. Protect the Waterfront

Florida boasts over 10,000 miles of rivers and streams, about 7,800 lakes, more than 700 freshwater springs, and the U.S.'s second-longest coastline. Even if you don't live immediately on one of these water bodies, you do live in what's known as a watershed (a drainage area). What you do in your home landscape has much further-reaching consequences than you might think.

One of the most important steps you can take to protect any water body is maintaining a 10-foot "maintenance-free zone" around it. Do not mow, fertilize, or use pesticides in this zone. Don't let any grass clippings or pet wastes get into the water, as these carry nutrients and harmful bacteria.

Seawalls, rip rap, and gabions can help minimize shoreline erosion, and if you maintain a riparian (water's edge) zone, install native aquatic plants such as giant bullrush and maidencane, and remove invasive exotic species like water hyacinth and purple loosestrife. A stormwater pond or canal can become an aesthetically pleasing and lively place, edged with plants and home to wildlife. Work with your neighbors or homeowner association to make your stormwater pond a Florida-Friendly neighborhood amenity.

For more information on the Florida Friendly techniques contact the Indian River County Extension office at (772) 770-5030 e-mail: indian@ifas.ufl.edu or visit <http://indian.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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