

Alachua County Homeowners Landscape Guide



UF/IFAS EXTENSION ALACHUA COUNTY



Welcome to Alachua County!

UF/IFAS Extension Alachua is excited that you call our county home. Our County boasts a diversity of industries, including agriculture and outdoor recreation, and is home to one of Florida's land-grant universities, the University of Florida. Water resources are an important component of life throughout Florida. Healthy water resources are vital for sustaining a healthy environment, providing food through agricultural production, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities.

It's important for all Floridians to consider their role in helping conserve Florida's water resources. Misuse of fertilizers or pesticides significantly impacts Florida's water qualities – no matter where you live in the state. Following UF/IFAS Extension recommendations with the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program, will provide science-based information that will help improve your landscape and protect Florida's water resources for our communities and future generations.

Learning about properly managing our landscapes in Florida can seem daunting, especially since our environmental conditions are drastically different than the rest of the country. We've put together this packet to help you navigate and learn about landscape management, the FFL Program, and the county resources available to you. Please don't hesitate to contact our offices if you have any questions. We look forward to serving you!



Cynthia Nazario-Leary, PhD

cnazarioleary@ufl.edu

Environmental and Community Horticulture Agent

Alachua County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator

UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About UF/IFAS Extension	1
About UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County	2
Alachua County Landscape Codes	3
Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program	6
Homeowner Resources & Apps	10
Alachua County Digital Media Resources	11
Turfgrass	12
Homeowners Best Management Practices for the Home Lawn (ENH979)	13
Turfgrass Fertilization in Alachua County	13
Mowing Your Florida Lawn (ENH10)	13
Weed Management Guide for Florida Lawns (ENH884)	13
Key for Identification of Landscape Turfgrass Diseases (SS-PLP-1)	13
Insect Pest Management on Turfgrass (ENY300)	13
Bahia grass for Florida Lawns (ENH6)	13
St. Augustine grass for Florida Lawns (ENH5)	13
Zoysia grass for Florida Lawns (ENH11)	13
Trees & Ornamental Plants	14
Pruning Palms (ENH1182)	15
Is my tree safe? Recognizing Conditions that Increase the Likelihood of Tree Failure (ENH1246) Ornamental Plants	15
Planting Shrubs in Florida Landscapes (ENH1129)	15
Establishing Shrubs in Florida Landscapes (ENH1130)	15
Cold Protection of Landscape Plants (ENH1)	15
Fruits & Vegetables	16
Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide (SP103)	17
Gardening in Raised Beds (ENH1211)	17
Natural Products for Managing Landscape and Garden Pests in Florida (ENY350)	17
Nematode Management in the Vegetable Garden (ENY012)	17
Citrus Culture in the Home Landscape (HS867)	17
Cover Crops & Green Manure for Your Garden	17
Landscape Design & Specialized Gardening Styles	18
Landscape Elements for a Florida-Friendly Yard (ENH1163)	19
Landscape Design with Edibles (ENH1214)	19
Butterfly Gardening in Florida (WEC22)	19
Landscaping Backyards for Wildlife: Top Ten Tips for Success (CIR1429)	19
Container Gardening for Outdoor Spaces (ENH1095)	19
Landscaping in Florida Shade (ENH1196)	19
Hummingbirds of Florida (WEC21)	19
The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Handbook	19
Landscape & Vegetable Garden Soil Test Form	19

UF/IFAS Extension

The University of Florida and Florida A&M University are Florida's land-grant universities. Extension services are part of the land-grant university system. Extension is the partnership between the state, federal, and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and information to the public. The University of Florida's extension services is typically referred to as UF/IFAS Extension, where IFAS means Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

UF/IFAS Extension is present throughout the entire state and present in each county. Our mission is to develop knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences and to making that knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life. To make this possible, we provide education, outreach, and research in agriculture, natural resources, lawn and garden, family resources, and 4-H Youth Development.

Each county extension office specifically serves their county's needs through use of county extension agents, regional specialized agents, and research specialist. The agents and researchers work with all Floridians to learn about the science-based solutions for their lives.



UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County

UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County addresses the needs of all Alachua County residents that are related to the state extension program. There are six extension agents in Alachua County's extension office, with support from different regional specialized agents, multi-county agents, and others with the Family Nutrition Program (FNP). Our county agents and specialist program areas include agriculture, residential horticulture, commercial horticulture, youth development, natural resources, consumer sciences, and livestock.



Cynthia Sanders, PhD
County Extension Director
Livestock
sanders1@ufl.edu



Cynthia Nazario-Leary, PhD
Environmental Horticulture
Master Gardener Volunteer
Coordinator
cnazarioleary@ufl.edu



Kevin Korus, DPH
Ag. & Natural Resources
kkorus@ufl.edu



Martha Maddox, M.S.
Family & Consumer Sciences
mmaddox@ufl.edu



Tatiana Sanchez, DPM
Commercial Horticulture
tatiana.sanchez@ufl.edu



Mary Lee Sale, M.S.
4-H Youth Development
msale@ufl.edu



Alachua County Landscape Codes

To help protect Florida's natural resources, Alachua County adopted different landscape codes: Irrigation restrictions, fertilizer ordinances, and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Code. Each enforceable code determines management strategies for homeowners.

Irrigation Restrictions

For all new irrigation systems or if you modify 50% or more of an existing system, you must comply with the county's irrigation efficiency design and maintenance code. In addition, irrigation restrictions determine when you can irrigate your landscapes. Vegetable gardens, hand watering with a spray nozzle with an automatic shutoff, micro-irrigation, and new landscapes for the first 60 days are exempt.

Irrigate only on your day(s), and not between 10 am and 4 pm		
Location	Summer (2nd Sun. in Mar - 1st Sun. in Nov)	Winter (1st Sun. in Nov - 2nd Sun. in Mar)
Odd House #	Wednesday and/or Saturday	Saturday
Even House #	Thursday and/or Sunday	Sunday
Non-Residential/ Commercial	Tuesday and/or Friday	Tuesday



Scan Here for More Info.

Alachua County Landscape Codes

To help protect Florida's natural resources, Alachua County adopted different landscape codes: Irrigation restrictions, fertilizer ordinances, and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Code. Each enforceable code determines management strategies for homeowners.

Fertilizer Code

Fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorous can negatively impact Florida's water quality when improperly applied. To help protect Florida's water resources, Alachua County passed the following fertilizer restrictions under Article IV of the Water Quality Code. The restrictions include:

- Fertilizers with nitrogen must have a minimum of 50% slow-release nitrogen.
- Fertilizers containing nitrogen may not be applied:
 1. between the beginning of July and end of February
 2. prior to rains or when soils are saturated
 3. for first 30 days after seeding or sodding a landscape
- Fertilizers containing phosphorous are prohibited unless a soil test indicates a deficiency
- Split fertilizers on impervious surfaces must be cleaned up immediately and kept from entering storm drain system
- No fertilizers shall be applied within 10 feet of a waterbody
- Grass clippings must be swept off impervious surfaces



Scan Here for More Info.



Alachua County Landscape Codes

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Code

Alachua County adopted a Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Code to help encourage landscape management decisions to reduce water usage, fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides in landscapes. The code states:

“A deed restriction or covenant may not prohibit or be enforced so as to prohibit any property owner from implementing Florida-friendly landscaping on his or her land or create any requirement or limitation in conflict with [Florida statute].”

As part of the code, the county developed a mitigation process of homeowner and HOA disagree. The mitigation starts by contacting Alachua County’s Environmental Protection Department.



Scan Here for More Info.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program

About

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program is a statewide initiative to protect Florida's water resources and natural habitat through the adoption of nine landscape management principles. Adopted into state law (F.S. Ch. 373.185), the FFL Program serves homeowners and industry professionals.

Florida-Friendly Landscapes protect Florida's unique natural resources by conserving water, reducing waste and pollution, creating wildlife habitat, and preventing erosion. Any landscape can be Florida-Friendly if it is designed and cared for according to the nine FFL principles, which encourage individual expression of landscape beauty. More, detailed information about each principle is located in the [Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook](#), which is located in this homeowners' guide.

FFL Recognition

A free service offered by UF/IFAS Extension is FFL Recognition. This service allows homeowners to have their landscapes recognized as an FFL. Master Gardener Volunteers or the county extension agent perform a site visit where they evaluate your landscape. If you meet the minimum requirements, you could potentially earn a "Silver" or "Gold" recognition. After earning recognition, you get a yard sign and certificate. For more information about the recognition process in Alachua County, check out our county FFL Webpage.



Scan Here for FFL
Recognition Info

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program

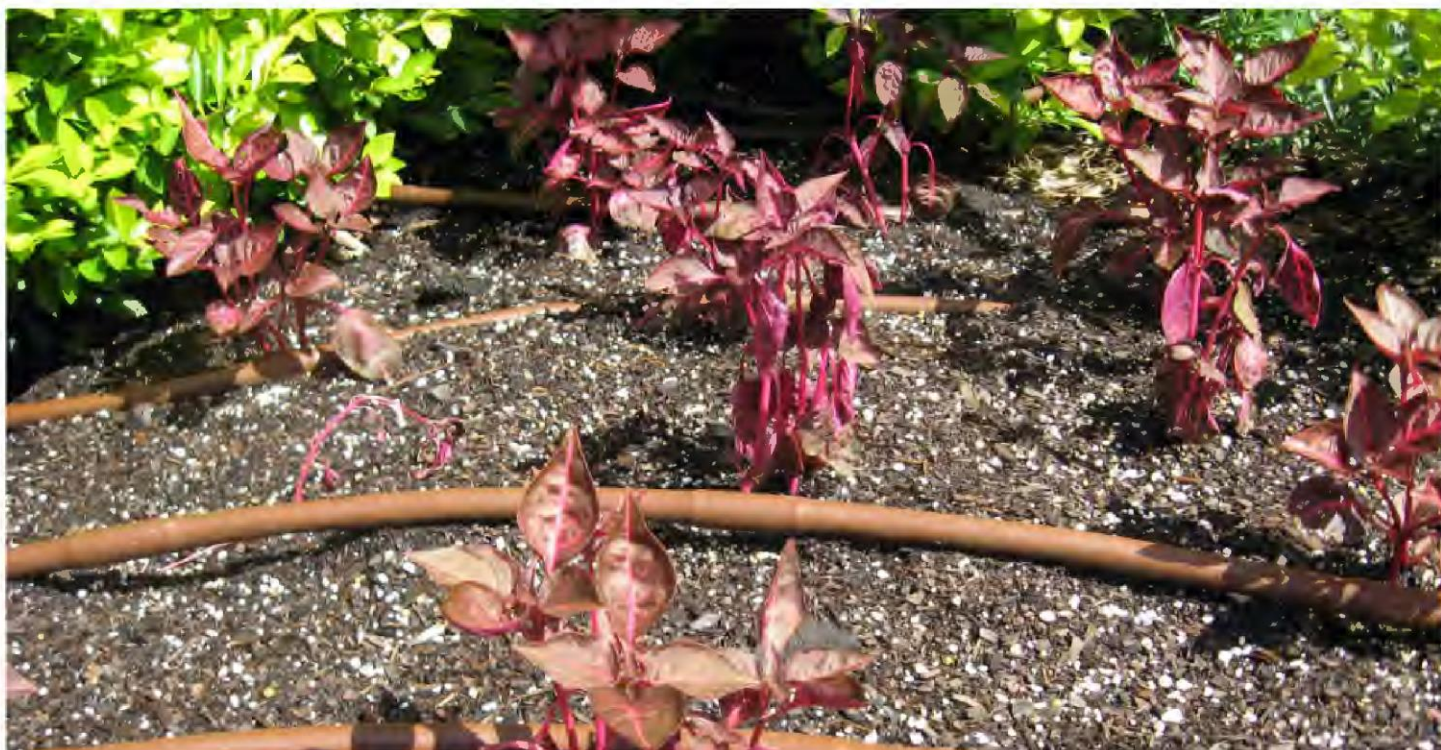
The Nine Principles of the FFL Program

Principle #1 - Right Plant, Right Place

Some plants prefer full sun while others prefer shade. Other plants may prefer lots of moisture while others can go weeks without water. Selecting the most appropriate plant material for your growing conditions is the backbone to any Florida-Friendly Landscape. By following the first principle of the FFL Program, your landscape will be on its way to become a Florida-Friendly yard.

Principle #2 - Water Efficiently

Applying water efficiently to a landscape is a must. Over watering or under-watering can dramatically impact plant quality and landscape health. Using water as efficiently as possible will save you money and help maintain a strong landscape.



Principle #3 - Fertilize Appropriately

Plants need nutrients to produce their food. Fertilizers help supply nutrients to plants. Although essential for plant growth, some nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) negatively impact our water resources. By completing regular soil tests and following UF/IFAS Recommendations for fertilizing, you'll be able to use fertilizers that benefits your plants and protects water resources.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program

Principle #4 - Mulch

Mulch is a major part of our landscapes. It provides an aesthetic quality to our landscapes, but also helps improve soil moisture retention, suppresses weeds, and protects plants. Properly mulching landscape beds with sustainable materials is an important part of a Florida-Friendly Landscape.

Principle #5 - Attract Wildlife

Birds, butterflies, and bees are iconic landscape visitors. Unfortunately, as development fragments natural areas, wildlife needs places to reproduce, be safe, and thrive. By attracting wildlife to your landscape, you create an important habitat needed for wildlife.



Principle #6 - Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

Whether you have insects, fungus, or weeds in your landscapes there are responsible ways to manage them. In fact, did you know that roughly 1% of insects in your landscapes are considered pests? The rest are considered beneficial or benign. Managing yard pests seems daunting, but with proper landscape management many landscape pests never become problematic or cease to exist.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program

Principle #7 - Recycle Yard Waste

Landscapes generate yard waste: grass clippings, twigs, leaves, etc. Rather than bagging up all the plant material, we can recycle it back into our landscapes. Recycling yard waste improves soil, provides nutrients to plant material, and helps improve water use.

Principle #8 - Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater carries pollutants to our waterbodies and contributes to flooding, erosion, and pollution. Through use of cisterns, rain barrels, rain gardens, and limited impervious surfaces, we can capture, store, and reuse much of the stormwater on our property. This allows us to use water as irrigation, which cleans water and reduces needs for irrigation.

Principle #9 - Protect the Waterfront

Water is life in Florida. With over 10,000 miles of rivers and streams, 7,800 lakes, and 700 freshwater springs, water is our greatest commodity. If we live along any body of water (including retention and detention ponds), maintaining a 10' "maintenance-free zone" protects water from pollution run-off. Plants along the waterfront intercept many of the pollutants that may impact water quality.



Homeowner Resources & Apps

The state and county provide many resources for the Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program. Some of the most common and important resources available to homeowners are listed below. Scan QR Codes with camera phone for link to webpages.

Webpages

Different webpages from the University of Florida and UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County provide many great resources for Alachua County homeowners.



The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Webpage



Alachua County FFL Webpage



Gardening Solutions Webpage

Publications

Different publications from UF provide more details about gardening-related topics. Other topical publications are available through UF's peer-reviewed publications or Ask IFAS.



The Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook



The FFL guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design



Ask IFAS - EDIS Publications

Smartphone Apps

The FFL Office provides free apps for smartphones. Topics include plant selection, butterfly gardening, toxic plants, and fertilizer ordinance info.



FFL Apps



Alachua County Digital Media Resources

UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County provides digital media resources to help connect homeowners and other clients to our online webinars and other resources.

Alachua County Extension Webpage

Our county webpage provides information about all upcoming events within Alachua County.



YouTube Channel - UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County

Our YouTube page provides a landing page for recorded online webinars and other educational videos from the county extension agents.



Facebook Page - UF IFAS Extension Alachua County Master Gardeners.

Alachua County's Master Gardener Volunteers manage a Facebook page where they regularly post relevant gardening topics and information about upcoming events.



Podcast - Extension Cord

Extension Cord is Alachua County's monthly podcast program. Agents interview and discuss different topics related to UF/IFAS Extension. Extension Cord is available on all major podcast platforms.



TURFGRASS

Turfgrass is Florida's most irrigated crop. Proper management of turfgrass is vital for its health. Without proper management, your turfgrass weakens, becomes susceptible to pests, and contributes to water pollution. Following UF/IFAS Extension Recommendations regarding turfgrass management will help you maintain a strong, healthy turfgrass.



Homeowners BMPs for the Home Lawn



Mowing Your Florida Lawn



Weed Mgmt. Guide for FL Lawns



Key for ID of Landscape Turfgrass Diseases



Insect Pest Mgmt. on Turfgrass



Bahia grass for Florida Lawns



St. Augustine grass for Florida Lawns



Zoysia grass for Florida Lawns



TREES AND ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

Florida has several attractive, hardy tree species of differing sizes. From small trees like redbuds to the majestic live oak. Shrubs are popular landscape plants used for foundation, hedge and mass plantings, as a screen, and in planter boxes. Palms and cycads add an exotic and tropical feel to the landscape. Three of the most common causes of poor plant establishment or death are planting too deep, under watering, and over watering. Knowing how and when to properly plant and care for trees and ornamentals in our North Central Florida climate will ensure that they thrive and add beauty to the landscape.



Pruning Palms



Is my Tree Safe?



Planting Shrubs in FL Landscapes



Establishing Shrubs in Florida Landscapes



Cold Protection of Landscape Plants



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

A sustainably grown “kitchen garden” landscape can complement your yard and provide a healthy food source. Edible landscapes are also a natural at attracting bees, butterflies, and other natural pollinators. Understanding our regional climate and knowing the fruits and vegetables that can be successfully grown throughout the year will increase your chance of success and a bountiful harvest. In neighborhoods, sustainably grown community gardens are a great way for residents to connect with both nature and one another, inspiring each other as they work together to grow their own healthy food.



FL Vegetable Gardening Guide



Gardening in Raised Beds



Natural Products for Managing
Landscape & Garden Pests in Florida



Nematode Mgmt. in the Vegetable Garden



Citrus Culture in the Home Landscape



Soil Organic Matter, Green
Manures, & Cover Crops for
Nematode Mgmt.



LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND SPECIALIZED GARDEN STYLES

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ works with the natural environment, rather than against it. These landscapes, if maintained correctly, will require less money, time, and effort on your part, while still looking healthy and beautiful. The nine principles serve as a road map to guide you in creating landscapes that are Florida-Friendly and allow for individual expression. Explore publications covering various garden designs and types to create a landscape that is friendly to the environment and will welcome you home.



Landscape Elements for a
Florida-Friendly Yard



Landscape Design with Edibles



Butterfly Gardening in Florida



Landscaping Backyards for Wildlife



Container Gardening for Outdoor Spaces



Landscaping in Florida Shade



Hummingbirds of Florida



Landscape & Vegetable
Garden Soil Test Form

