Florida’s population is increasing every day. Florida is a great place to live and move to because of its warm sub-tropical climate, its famous beaches, freshwater lakes and rivers and its natural forests. Unfortunately, the ever-increasing population and expanding communities are taking its toll. As responsible Floridians we need to start now to protect Florida’s environment for us and future generations to come. That is the goal of the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program.

**What is Florida Yards and Neighborhoods?**

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**Florida Friendly Tips**

- Mow at the highest setting
- Use Slow-Release Fertilizer
- Mulch 2”-3” Deep
- Use Compost
- Use porous walkways

Our water bodies and contaminating our aquifer. A Florida-Friendly landscape preserves and conserves our natural flora and fauna. Florida Friendly landscapes also incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods that are both highly effective and environmentally friendly. Most importantly, a Florida-Friendly landscape helps to protect our most precious limited resource; our water. Did you know that over 50% of the water used by households goes to irrigating their landscapes? A Florida-Friendly landscape will help reduce your use of water dramatically within the landscape. Conserving water will not only protect our water supply, but it will also create a much healthier and cost-efficient landscape. In order to establish a Florida-Friendly landscape, there are a set of 9 principles for homeowners to use to get their yard designated as Florida-Friendly. These are Right Plant, Right Place, Watering Efficiently, Mulching, Fertilizing Appropriately, Managing Yard Pest Responsibly, Attracting Wildlife, Recycling, Reducing Storm-water Runoff and Protecting the Water-front. By implementing these principles in your own yard, you will be well on your way to creating a beautiful Florida-Friendly landscape. We can all make a difference and strive to see all of Sumter County as Florida Friendly. Please visit our website at:

http://sumter.ifas.ufl.edu for detailed information on Florida Friendly Landscaping.

Jim Davis
FYN Extension Agent
Florida-Friendly Yard– Hal Moores-The Villages

Our precious Earth is struggling to “LIVE GREEN” yet; she continually gives us life sustaining gifts. Today, it is no surprise that she is in need of nurturing and I wish to share with you one gentleman’s quest to do just that. Hal Moores, a resident of The Villages has become the first Sumter County resident to achieve recognition as a Florida-Friendly Landscape. This is a doable and valuable life lesson project for which we can share in and contribute towards our common goal of “Earth Friendly” living. Mr. Moores has followed basic FYN principles by using native and Florida Friendly plantings such as: Willowy firecracker with red shoots, blue/lavender and red salvias, bougainvillea creating an arbor using 4/4 posts as the framework along with some morning glory bushes, porter weed, periwinkles, amaryllis, and crape myrtle trees all placed using the right plant right place principle to create this special garden. He has used porous stepping stones to create a path way through the garden and he used mulch to help conserve water and reduce the amount of weeds. Hal has also used drip irrigation to reduce the amount of water consumption. Hal’s favorite area is his backyard where he also created a wildlife habitat supplying a bird bath, bird house and feeders which has attracted a very prominent woodpecker for his viewing pleasure. Working his inspired garden, offers Hal a great therapeutic benefit as well. Thank you, Mr. Moores, for your dedication and contribution to our environment. For more information on how to have a Florida Friendly yard please contact our FYN Program at 352-753-0124. We will be happy to speak with you on the necessary steps to begin and complete your inspired projects.

Donna Lester
Master Gardener

Florida Friendly Plant– African Bulbine

*Bulbine frutescens* “Hallmark”

Orange African bulbine is well-deserving as the first featured Florida Friendly plant. Bulbine, a native of South Africa, is a succulent evergreen that flowers throughout the year. It is great to use as an accent plant, border plant and container plant. Bulbine is a sun lover, so give it at least 6 hours of direct sunlight to keep it happy. Bulbine planted in masses provides a dramatic statement when used in front of your entrance way. Bulbine is a very cold tolerant plant surviving temperatures down to 20 degrees. Once established, this plant is very drought tolerant. In fact Bulbine hates wet feet, so don’t over-water! Bulbine gets about 1.5 to 2.0 feet tall and produces orange/yellow flowers spikes that reach out to about 1.5 ft. One plant can have as many as 15-20 flower spikes. Bulbine is used in our Bushnell education garden and has proven to be an extremely tough plant, resistant to insects and diseases. This is a plant everyone can grow. Bulbine will need to be divided every 3-4 years, but that just means more free plants to put in your yard! Companion plants for bulbine include society garlic, variegated flax lily, salvia and many of the low growing woody shrubs.
Fertilizing in the Fall

Fall is almost here and now is the time to put down your last fertilization application for the year. Be sure to get your fertilizer down in September or early October. Applying fertilizer too late in the year may cause plants to develop new growth that may be damaged by a freeze. For flowering perennials and woody shrubs, go ahead and apply a slow release fertilizer (Osmocote & Dynamite are a few) around the drip line of the plants. Slow-release granulated or prilled forms are preferred because they breakdown slowly over time. Certain landscape plants, however, are going to need specific fertilization requirements. For palm trees, apply a slow-release form that contains essential micro-nutrients such as boron, manganese and iron. Do not use Epsom salts. Excess magnesium can cause other deficiencies such as potassium deficiency. A complete form such as an 8-2-12 should contain everything you need for your palms. Other plants such as acidic loving species (azaleas and gardenias), citrus and roses will also benefit from a fertilizer suited to their own special needs. For your turf grass, use a slow-release complete fertilizer such as 16(N)-4(P)-8(K) or 15-0-15 at a rate of ½ lb. of Nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft.. Look for these terms on the product label: polymer or resin coated urea, water insoluble nitrogen, sulfur coated urea, isbutylidene diurea(IBDU), urea form or activated sludge. Many homeowners ask if there is a need to apply a winterizer for their lawn. It is not necessary for our warm season grasses. Applying a fertilizer high in potassium (K), such as 15(K), will be enough to get your turf through winter. Contact the extension office for a free chart of proper fertilization applications for your turf. Remember to be environmentally friendly. Avoid the use of weed & feed mixtures, do not apply fertilizer before a heavy rain, avoid fertilizing near water bodies and sweep up any excess fertilizer on your sidewalk or driveway. Always remember, less is best. Using these simple guidelines, you will get your plants off to a nice and healthy start in Spring.

Jim Davis
FYN Extension Agent

Watering Restrictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumter County is under Once a Week Watering Restrictions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following these restrictions:</td>
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<tr>
<td>If your address or house number ends with…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0 or 1, water only on Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 or 3, water only on Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4 or 5, water only on Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>-6 or 7, water only on Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>-8 or 9*, water only on Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These restrictions remain in effect through February 28, 2010 for use of water from public and private utilities, wells and surface water sources (ponds, rivers, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>For More Information on Watering Restrictions visit:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watermatters.org</td>
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</tbody>
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Water Saving Tips

- Inspect Your Irrigation System Monthly
- Check for Leaks
- Manually operate your irrigation clock
- Water only as-needed