

Is a Florida Friendly Landscape Evaluation for Me?



Photo by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Leon County Extension: A Florida Friendly landscape incorporates nine basic principles designated by the University of Florida IFAS Extension to help protect our environment.

*Lana Arnold is a Master Gardener volunteer with the University of Florida IFAS Leon County Extension, <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu>
Send your gardening questions to ask-a-mastergardener@leoncountyfl.gov*

Thursday, July 29, 2010
Tallahassee Democrat

Are you a great gardener? Want to display proudly your expertise to your friends and neighbors? Are you a beginning gardener and want to know where to start? Are you a tired gardener who would love to know how to stop repeating the same mistakes?

Maybe a Florida Friendly Landscape evaluation is the key for you. Following the nine Florida Friendly Landscape principles can make it easier to create and maintain a landscape that preserves the unique environment in which you live.

Perhaps, you are not sure that you have picked the right plant for the right place. Or maybe you want to know if you are watering in the most efficient manner. Are you confused about the fertilizer labels? Are you routinely fertilizing or having your landscape fertilized, but you aren't sure if you are overdoing it? Suppose you like the look of mulch in your yard, but you aren't quite sure if you are mulching the right way and for the right reasons.

Are you a lover of wildlife, birds, squirrels, rabbits, butterflies or even snakes? Do you try to make your garden an attractive place for our native animals? Are you concerned about overuse of chemicals in the environment to control unwanted pests? Have you planted so that you reduce the need to prune, mow and haul off landscape debris? Do you have a storm water runoff problem that you have worked to control? If you live on the waterfront, have you done the right activities to protect it?

If you would like these questions and others more specific to your situation answered for you, you can request that a team of Master Gardeners visit your landscape at a pre-arranged time with you present, to evaluate your yard, using nine principles developed by the University of Florida IFAS that are critical to good horticultural practices. The painless evaluation involves a dialogue between you and these trained Master Gardeners which culminates in a written report about what was discovered. If you achieve enough points to be declared a Florida Friendly Landscape, a sign is awarded for you to display proudly in your yard. If no sign is awarded, you still win, because you learn what you can do to improve your horticultural practices and save time, effort and money.

You don't have to have the most beautifully landscaped yard in the neighborhood to be a Florida Friendly Yard, but the effort needed to become one is surprisingly easy. Contact Gary Griffin FYN Coordinator at runlong@nettally.com to set the process in motion today. You can also call (850) 606-5202 as well as print the form at [http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/2011 FYN-Site-Visit-Request-Form.pdf](http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/2011%20FYN-Site-Visit-Request-Form.pdf)

###