



## Florida Friendly Landscaping Practices Benefit Our Yards and Environment

Some homeowners may be loving their yards to death and harming the environment at the same time, all with the best of intentions. For instance, too much fertilizer applied to St. Augustine grass can lead to thatch buildup and disease, while the runoff from the fertilizer harms the Indian River Lagoon; too much water encourages shallow root growth, leads to dollar weed and other weed problems, and depletes our water resources.

There are some simple tips you can follow to promote a healthy lawn and reduce maintenance, while saving water resources and helping to protect nearby water bodies from harmful chemicals found in stormwater runoff.

- Irrigate, if rain has not already done the job, St. Augustine grass only about once or twice a week in the summer and about once a week or every two weeks in the winter from December through February. Bahia grass needs water even less often.
- Give your lawn an average of half an inch of water. To determine how long it takes your system to put out this amount, place cans around the yard and measure the water collected in a half an hour. Measure the amount in each can, add together, then divide for the average. The grass should not receive more than one inch of water per week.
- Be careful about how much fertilizer you apply because too much leads to thatch buildup and disease and promotes excessive growth. Fertilize only during the growing season.
- Use pesticides only when needed and just to the affected areas, not the entire lawn.
- Always observe water restrictions. In



Melbourne, **year-around rules allow for watering only between the hours of 6 p.m. and 10 a.m.** This applies to both City-supplied water or water from a private well. Rules can become even stricter if a water shortage emergency is declared. Those using reclaimed water are exempt from this restriction.

## Local homeowners benefit from “Florida Friendly” seminars

About 400 residents from all over Brevard and some from as far away as Jacksonville, Lake Wales and Orange City, learned tips on developing and maintaining “Florida Friendly” yards at two free seminars held in February and March. Sponsored by the Melbourne Groundwater Guardians, the seminar held at Florida Tech on February 17 garnered excellent ratings by the 200 participants who completed surveys about the program.

Three sessions were given during the three-hour program by extension agent and Florida Today columnist Sally Scalera and by Florida Yards & Neighborhoods agent Doug Kutz.

Due to the program’s success, the Groundwater Guardians plan to make the seminars an annual event.



### Conservation Conversation

Published quarterly by the City of Melbourne Utilities Department. For more information, please contact the Environmental Community Outreach Manager by phone at (321) 674-5761, by e-mail at [jlwiler@melbourneflorida.org](mailto:jlwiler@melbourneflorida.org), or visit our web site at [www.melbourneflorida.org/watercon](http://www.melbourneflorida.org/watercon)

## Many easy ways to save H<sub>2</sub>O

**Fix the drip.** A leaky faucet with a drip of just 1/16 of an inch in diameter (about the size of this O) can waste 10 gallons of water a day. Fix the drip by replacing worn washers or valve seats.

**The silent leak.** A toilet bowl leak is probably the single greatest water waster in homes. A leak of one gallon every 24 minutes (an average amount) wastes 60 gallons per day or almost 2,000 gallons a month. To check for a leak, place a few drops of food color in the tank and wait to see if any color appears in the bowl without flushing. If it does, you have a leak.

**Close the hose.** A 1/2 inch garden hose under normal pressure pours out more than 600 gallons of water per hour. If left overnight, one hose can easily waste twice as much water as an average family might use in a month.



## Bits & Pieces from Recycling Yard Waste Tips

Since 1992 yard waste has been separated from garbage and is



collected and mulched to reduce the amount of waste being

landfilled.

In order for it to be mulched, yard waste cannot be placed in plastic bags since plastic bags cannot be mulched. Melbourne City ordinance requires yard waste to be placed in cans with lids. If you have larger fronds and branches, these should be cut to four-foot lengths and stacked uniformly for collection.

The yard waste you place for collection will be mulched and the mulch is available free of charge. To find out how to obtain it, call the Sarno Landfill at 255-4365 for more information.

## Phone Book Recycling

New phone books will begin arriving in April. Don't throw your old books in the trash, instead, bring them to one of the convenient drop-off locations in Melbourne for recycling.

You won't be able to put your old phone books in your curbside bins, but during April and May the following locations will be available as drop-off sites. These locations are:

- Melbourne Fire Station #77, 3721 N. Wickham Road (just south of BCC)
- Melbourne Auditorium, 625 E. Hibiscus Blvd.
- Melbourne Fire Station #75, 151 University Blvd.

Please put your old phone book in the outdoor dumpster-style container which will be at any of the above locations during April and May.

*Information from Deborah Meshelany, City of Melbourne Recycling Coordinator, phone: 953-6302*



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Melbourne is proud to be a  
Groundwater Guardian Community

