

Florida Friendly Irrigation Tips

Homeowners and businesses now have strict ordinances on yard watering. The regulations are required, because one half of all the drinking water in South Florida is used for outdoor irrigation. Homeowners and businesses with odd-numbered street addresses may water lawns and landscapes on Wednesdays and Saturdays between 12midnight and 10 am and/or between 4 pm and 11:59 pm. Homeowners and businesses with even-numbered street addresses may water lawns and landscapes on Thursdays and Sundays between 12midnight and 10 am and/or between 4 pm and 11:59 pm.

Gardeners are choosing to cut their outdoor water use by applying Florida-Friendly landscaping principles in their yards.

One of the Florida-Friendly principles is to water efficiently to avoid overwatering, use micro-irrigation, and water your lawn and plants only when you know they need it or they show signs of stress. Use a shut-off device to detect when a certain amount of rain has fallen or when a certain level of moisture is present in the soil. Perform regular irrigation system maintenance;



make sure your irrigation system is calibrated so you know how much it's applying each time. Use the weather to your advantage—don't irrigate if it's rained in the past twenty-four hours or if rain is forecast in the next twenty-four hours.

Irrigation Tips To Save Water and To Keep Plants Healthy:

- Adjust irrigation zones/sprinklers to avoid spraying buildings, driveways, streets, and sidewalks. In addition, be certain that plants or structures do not interfere with irrigation spray patterns.
- Make sure that there is a functioning rain shut-off device placed in an effective location (i.e. rainfall collection will not be impeded).
- Use a dual programmable timer to irrigate different areas of the landscape for different lengths of time.
- Separate the irrigation system into multiple zones to water only those areas that need it.
- Watering at the right time of day, when the sun is low, the winds are calm and temperatures are cool will save a lot of water - as much as 30% - by reducing evaporative losses. The best time to water is late jjust before sunrise.

- Use micro-irrigation systems (sometimes called low-volume irrigation) on ornamental planting areas, which use water more efficiently by dispensing water slowly near the base of the plant, thereby reducing runoff and evaporation.
- Water the landscape only as needed prevent water from being wasted, keep fertilizers from being washed away and reduce promoting plant diseases.

For information on Florida Friendly Landscaping call the Master Gardener volunteer hotline at the Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service M-F 9am-4pm at 233-1750.