

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- **Sunshine
Spotlight: I4
runoff**
- **Yard
Calendar**
- **Rain Barrel
Workshop**



The New Leaf Newsletter: Florida-Friendly Landscaping

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2016

Fighting Weeds: Mulch Matters

There's nothing all that glamorous about mulch – unless perhaps you're using gemstones rather than bark – but the benefits of mulch makes it a necessary layer in your landscape beds.

Mulch separates the foliage from the soil. We know how mulch helps our soil – it holds

in moisture and as organic mulches break down they add nutrients to ground too. Furthermore, a 2-3 inch layer of mulch makes it much harder for weeds to push their heads to the surface. Weeds mixed in with your flowers and shrubs can instantly make your landscape bed look messy or “unmade”. Here's how mulch fights weeds:

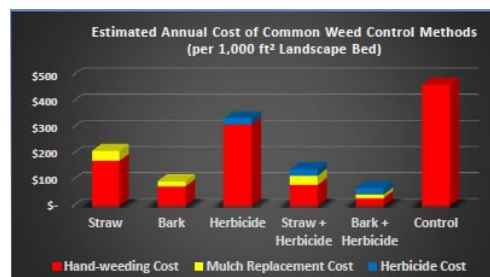
- **Light exclusion** – many annual weed species need high light levels to germinate.

- **Reduce available air and water in seedbed** – coarse, textured particles dry out quicker and keep moisture on soil surface.

- **Creation of physical barrier.**
- **Allelopathic** – in rare cases the mulch might leach a chemical to inhibit weed growth.

Dr. Chris Marble researches weed control at the UF Mid-Florida Research Center in Apopka. His experiments show that spending your time and money on mulch saves you time and money in the long run on weed control. A combination of mulch and herbicide is most effective while doing nothing is least effective.

If you want to deliver a one-two punch to weeds, you'll want to apply herbicide



before laying down mulch. If you do it the other way around (mulch first then herbicides), the mulch may prevent the herbicide from reaching the weeds (the herbicide binds to the mulch, especially if it's a dense, fine-textured mulch).

Will some weeds still poke through? Probably. You can't keep a good weed down, but you can drastically reduce the amount of weeds that occur.

So get mulching!

What about all your other mulch questions? Ask away!

Email

fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov or call 407-665-5575.

The Newest EDIS Articles

First Aid to Pesticide Exposure

Be able to recognize the symptoms. Pesticide poisoning is a commonly under-diagnosed illness.

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi256>

Contaminants in the Urban Environment: Microplastics

Inconspicuous microplastics have a widespread presence in the environment and are found in diverse organisms. This publication describes microplastics' source, effects, and ways to minimize them.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss649>

Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide —Revised

Get the latest scoop on vegetable gardening in Florida with this start-to-finish 11-page guide!

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>

Get all the EDIS documents!

www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu

A First for Stormwater: Altamonte Springs' A-FIRST Project

In October 2015, the City of Altamonte Springs activated their A-FIRST stormwater system for a section of Interstate 4. (I-4). On the average day, enough rainwater runoffs I-4 to fill seven Olympic-sized swimming pools. This stormwater runoff, potentially loaded with gas, car fluids, and other sediments would typically dispel into the nearest waterway, including the Little Wekiva River. Instead, Altamonte Springs developed a system to collect that runoff, clean it, and use it instead to water lawns in Altamonte Springs and Apopka. By redistributing this stormwater appropriately, Altamonte Springs has helped preserve our natural waterways and provided water for homeowners thirsty lawns. Danielle Marshal, the Division Director for Streets and Stormwater, describes A-FIRST and the role homeowners have.

Why did you get behind the A-FIRST project?

The City of Altamonte Springs has long been a leader in the realms of alternative water supply and environmental stewardship. The city developed creative ways to conserve water through the Altamonte-FDOT Integrated Reuse and Stormwater Treatment (A-FIRST) project.

A-FIRST was initially conceived in 2006 but as is often the case, all elements didn't align to move a great project forward. Fast forward to 2013 and the right people were in the right place at the right time to bring the project to fruition. City staff, as well as the Florida Dept. of Transportation, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection and the St Johns River Water Management District, reengaged in discussions on the A-FIRST concept, which was modified, evaluated and developed by the City's team. Extensive discussions were held between all agencies and a funding strategy was developed, making A-FIRST a win for all four agencies.

In just over a year, A-FIRST evolved from a simple concept to a fully permitted construction project—a rare accomplishment when including a multitude of engineering disciplines, state agencies and regional goals. The project showcases the opportunities that exist when organizations work together to form groundbreaking, bold new ways to solve problems, as opposed to the same old “cookie cutter” approach.

The United States Dept. of Transportation has regarded the A-FIRST project as the first of its kind in the U.S. A-FIRST brings together elements of stormwater management, water supply and environmental protection to provide a truly unique integrated approach to flood protection, alternative water supply and nutrient loading reduction. It is anticipated that A-FIRST will eliminate an annual discharge of 31 tons of nitrogen and 14 tons of phosphorus into the Little Wekiva River.



Why do you believe in FFL?

The need to reduce the demand on groundwater for landscape irrigation was realized long ago by City leaders. In the 1980's the City established their extensive reclaimed water system (Project APRICOT) to reduce the community's dependence on groundwater for irrigation, taking advantage of an alternative, lesser quality water source. Over the years, we have been able to educate customers through our partnership with the UF/IFAS programs that foster the FFL philosophy to further reduce demands on groundwater. As community leaders, it is our responsibility to secure precious resources for the future. Partnering with programs such as yours, pulls together limited resources to allow for a greater impact statewide than we could provide locally.

What's the most important thing a homeowner can do?

The most important thing a homeowner can do is to take ownership in his/her role in the statewide collective effort to reduce potable water usage. Small changes in daily habits can significantly reduce water consumption.

* Pictured above left to right: Leonard Hammock, Karen Powers, Scott Causseaux, Danielle Marshall, Andrew Hauck, Karen McCullen, Chris Rader, Ed Torres (Public Works and Utilities Director), Jo Ann Jackson, April Verpoorten, Victoria Bogle, Travis Hollman, Daniel Buckland, Cornelius George, Shariff Thomas.

Your Yard Calendar

What sights in your yard do you get to look forward to? Flowering trees and frolicking critters will make their debut at different times of year. Yard maintenance can also be most effective at different times of year. Pruning depends on flowering and new growth. Herbicide use works best when timed with sprouting and seeding. See what February and March have in store for us.

February

Flowering:

Chickasaw Plum, Eastern Redbud, Eastern Dogwood, Fringe Tree, Japanese Magnolia, Taiwan Cherry

Wildlife:

Pileated woodpeckers start breeding; they'll drum noisily on street posts. Little blue- and tri-colored herons, wood and mottled ducks, and snail kites are also breeding. Gopher tortoises stay in their burrows.



To Do:

Fertilize shrub (if needed) and apply fresh mulch. Apply pre-emergent weed killer to lawns.

March

Flowering:

Azalea, Eastern Redbud, Sweet Acacia

Wildlife:

Mourning doves and Carolina wrens are nesting. Frogs and toads are breeding. Rabbit!

To Do:

Prune azaleas after flowering. Prune shrubs as new growth begins. Check sprinklers run time for spring.



Learn more at:

Central Florida Gardening Calendar:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep450>

Florida Wildlife Extension, Wildlife Happenings:

http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/happenings/

Upcoming Events

Landscaping for Shade

Feb 10, 6:30 -8:30 pm Extension Auditorium

Where's all the sunshine? If it's not in your yard, this class will help you select and care for plants best-adapted for shady conditions. Register at: <https://eventbrite/event/19621934735>

Living with the Lake

Feb 13, 10:00 am—12:00 pm, Margaret Wesley Park
195 Park Place, Lake Mary

Curious about plants along a waterbody? Ready to design your waterfront? Come to Living with the Lake! Learn about our lakes and how to improve their water quality.

Call 407-665-5575 to register.

Eco-Paddle

Feb 20, 9:00—11:30 am, Wekiva Island
1014 Miami Springs Dr., Longwood

Learn how to positively affect our waterways and see the river firsthand on a canoe tour.

Space is limited. Call 407-665-5560 to register.

Getting to Know Invasive Plants

Feb 23, 7:00-9:00 pm Extension Auditorium

Which plants are planning for world domination? Which have already started their spread through your yard? Learn them here in this fun, interactive class! Register at:

<https://eventbrite.com/event/21043644106>

Lake Concord Shoreline Restoration

For more information contact Marissa Williams

407-262-7725 x 1229 or mwilliams@casselberry.org

Fertilize Appropriately

Mar 16, 6:30 -7:30 pm Extension Auditorium

Are you feeding your plants a nutritious diet? Learn when and how much to fertilize your lawn and landscape. Register at:

<https://eventbrite.com/event/19622063119>

Rain Barrel Workshop

Mar 25, 2:30 - 4:30 pm OR 6:30 - 8:30 pm,
Extension Auditorium

Rain barrels are a great way to capture a portion of a rain storm and save it for another day. In this workshop, we will construct a rain barrel for you to take home.

Cost: \$20.00 –Register online at:

2:30pm: <https://eventbrite.com/event/21010951321>

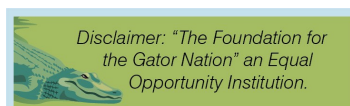
6:30pm: <https://eventbrite.com/event/21010968372>

All events are FREE unless otherwise noted.

***Registration is required at least two days before the event.**

Call 407-665-5560 or email fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov

**Extension Auditorium address:
250 W County Home Rd., Sanford, 32773**



Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM



FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS



Taryn Sudol, Editor
Florida-Friendly Landscaping/
Florida Yards and Neighborhoods
Extension Agent

Extension Office
250 W. County Home Road
Sanford, FL 32773

Phone: 407-665-5575
E-mail: fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov

www.seminolecountyfl.gov/fyn
www.fyn.ifas.ufl.edu

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 Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles. Seminole County's program is a partnership between the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service, the Public Works department's Watershed Management division, and local government, including the cities below.



Like us on Facebook!
Search "UF IFAS Extension Seminole County Florida-Friendly Landscaping"