

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Roadmap



Alternatives for creating Florida-friendly spaces

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The natural environment includes many things. I encourage folks to use all natural elements in the landscapes they build. Typical items seen in Florida landscapes include managed plants and acres of turf. Reducing the necessity for costly managed care, material replacement expense and pressure on natural resources are important things to consider when designing a landscape. Finding ways to reduce high maintenance and water consuming landscape space is essential to sustainable landscaping in our Florida communities.

Areas with significant tree canopy reduce the amount of sunlight captured below limiting the ability to successfully grow lawn grasses. These spaces are perfect for installation of sustainable Florida-friendly materials. Evaluate the understory considering soil conditions, drainage and ease of maintenance. Minimally plant these areas giving the plants room to grow and leave open space for cultivation between plants to control undesirables.

Always use mulch that is easily and economically available to cover the space. Pine straw is typically my first choice for its ability to cover significant space with limited cost or easy collection. Landfills often offer recycled mulch products. Nothing wrong with some open space covered with harvested pine straw, simply planted with drought tolerant plants.

Keep it clean and simple. Consider native plants adaptable to the planting conditions. They thrive on their own with little care. Reducing turf space should

always be considered when renovating in densely shaded areas.

Landscape boulder gardens, rock outcroppings, pervious patios and walkways are also accent

features which highlight and consume space requiring only minimal planting or care. Boulder and rock gardens are a great way to use stone features mimicking natural deposits without adding water to the mix. Durable walkways and patios consume space requiring little management or supplemental water.

Paving stones can be combined with aggregate and plant accents bordered by timbers which add detail to the design. I often use river slicks to capture the edge of gardens holding in the organic mulches beneath the plants, adding a natural foreground

element rather than just green plants. Timbers can also be used to capture any installed aggregate stones to prevent movement of the stones to unwanted areas.



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Stone and timber are significant natural elements for garden design and contrast well with introduced foliage.

Water is also a vital natural element to be used wisely in our landscapes. Man-made amenities exist to curb a landscape's consumption of water. Smart irrigation controllers target supplemental watering at specific times, durations and seasons. Operational rain sensors are required by statute for automated irrigation systems in Florida. Upgraded weather stations act as rain sensors, but also enter other environmental factors into proper irrigation management decisions calculated by the controller.

Utilizing plant and non-plant elements in our landscapes imitates the natural world and makes garden creations more attractive, soothing and sustainable. Create a natural bird bath using organic elements rather than plastic versions. When gardening, I prefer nature.



Examples of pervious patios and walkways which use landscape space typically reserved for water consuming lawns.

No mowing and no watering!

