

The Villages®

Community Development Districts

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

January 13, 2020

1. What type of pesticides should be used?

Before considering the type of pesticide, it is best to identify the pest. If a pesticide is required, the least toxic insecticide, herbicide or fungicide should be used that will be effective, following the product label. To identify the pest, you can contact UF/IFAS Extension or an Ask the Master Gardener plant clinic in your county (Sumter, Lake or Marion). You can find the contact information for the Sumter, Lake and Marion county extension offices by clicking the following link-

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/contact/county-list.html>.

2. What is the difference between stone and mulch?

While stone is attractive it does not benefit the soil or plants and can exacerbate cold or heat for plant roots, as well as compact soils. Organic mulches such as pine straw, pine bark nuggets or melaleuca will break down over time improving the soil, moderate soil temperatures (earlier warmup in spring, cooler in the summer) and can prevent weeds when applied at 2-3 inches. Do not apply mulch up against bark of trees and shrubs – keep it several inches away.

3. When is the correct time to prune?

Most southern plants are safe to trim throughout the growing season. These decisions are usually based on the type of plant, design intent and size restrictions for the area it is planted. Generally speaking, do not prune most plants during early fall and into warmer winter times. Not trimming during this time can avoid damaging new succulent growth by cold temperatures. During the dormant season – winter months, you may prune dormant deciduous trees including trimming (not topping) crape myrtles. In February, you can prune your roses and grape vines. Major pruning after that should wait until mid-March or for a holiday reference, St. Patrick's Day.

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4. Should I use filter fabric?

It is not recommended to use filter fabric. It is not a long-term solution to weed growth, and may perhaps inhibit fertilizers from contacting roots for uptake.

5. Is it okay to spray for insects myself?

It is best to identify the pest first. If a pesticide is required, the least toxic insecticide, herbicide or fungicide should be used that will be effective, following the product label. To identify the pest, you can contact UF/IFAS Extension or an Ask the Master Gardener plant clinic in your county (Sumter, Lake or Marion). You can find the contact information for the Sumter, Lake and Marion county extension offices by clicking the following link- <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/contact/county-list.html>. It is not recommended to use broad spectrum insecticides and spray without identifying the insect.

6. Should I consider the amount of sun my new plants will get?

There are plants that are tolerant of sun and part shade or shade, and plants that are specific in their sun requirements. You should consider the amount of sun that your plants get based on the needs of the specific plants. Reading product labels on purchased plants can help with placement in the correct location.

7. How can I help control slugs and snails?

It is good to identify the slugs or snails that you are dealing with. There are both Florida native slugs and snails which are decomposers, but also those that can be pests and some which consume the native species. Often dense plantings, mulch and moisture can be attractive to those species. Reducing some of the thickness of mulch, overhanging vegetation and overwatering may solve some of the problem. There are possible chemical controls or baits that can be purchased locally. To learn more about Slugs of Florida, visit <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in891>.

8. Will rain water coming from my gutter affect what will grow in that area?

Yes, the water can impact the plants, depending on the specific plant and its ability to grow in a wetter environment. If rainwater comes off a roof with no gutter, the rainwater can also damage plants. If gutters deliver a lot of water to a bed that you suspect is causing problems, you may redirect that water to another location.

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9. When is Florida's most active growing season for my lawn? And for plants?

Typically the last full moon in March ends the threat for frost and kicks off warmer weather. This warm weather is perfect for plants to grow and lasts through the holidays, depending on the year. Historically, we rarely have severe frost in this area after mid-March. Plants and lawns will be actively growing at that time. Most active growth occurs in the summer months and tapers off in the fall. The start and end of the active growth season is very much dependent on the weather and varies each year. The turf used in Central Florida is warm season turf so its active growing season is when the temperature is warm. Landscape plants' active growing season is also during the warmer season. Fertilization and depending on the turf or plants, the amount of water delivered would happen during the growing season. For specific recommendations on fertilization and water, you can contact UF/IFAS Extension in your county or visit an Ask the Master Gardener Plant Clinic in your county for specific information. You can find the contact information for the Sumter, Lake, and Marion here- <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/contact/county-list.html>

10. When is the best time to fertilize?

While Spring and Fall are generally the best times to fertilize, the best time to fertilize lawn and landscape is when they are actively growing. A soil test submitted to UF/IFAS can provide fertilizing recommendations based on soil test results. Stop by your local Extension office and collect a soil test kit which provides soil test bag and instructions on how to collect, and submit the sample to the UF/IFAS Soil Testing Lab.

11. Do lawn and pest companies fertilize properly?

It is important for homeowners to be informed consumers. Check with your landscape company for a schedule of the application of fertilizers (and others such as insecticide, herbicide and fungicides). They should be fertilizing based on active growth of lawn and landscape and not fertilizing lawns during the dormant season (October until the end of March/beginning of April).

12. What should I do before removing a tree on my property?

When considering removing a tree, you should consider the reason for removing the tree – size, health, dying, etc.

The deed restrictions and the District's adopted rule provide that any tree in excess of 4 inches in diameter requires architectural approval prior to being removed.

Section 163.045 Florida Statutes provides:

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A local government may not require approval for the removal of a tree on residential property if the property owner obtains documentation from an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture or a Florida licensed landscape architect that the tree presents a danger to persons or property. If an owner does not have this documentation, then the owner must submit an Architectural Review Committee Application Form for review and approval by the Architectural Review Committee. For assistance, please contact Community Standards at (352) 751-3912.

13. What should I do if leaves are spotted?

This may indicate fungus or depending on the plant may indicate nutrient deficiency. You can send photos to your Extension Agent to check water levels. Email photos to the residential horticulture agent in your county or the County Extension inbox. You can find the contact information for the Sumter, Lake and Marion county extension offices by clicking the following link- <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/contact/county-list.html>.

14. What should I do if the Boxwoods are dying out or have Blight?

There are many reasons why boxwoods may be having problems – it is best to bring samples (and possibly photos to show location of planting) to Extension or to an Ask the Master Gardener Plant Clinic to evaluate what the problem is. It may be something as simple as right plant, wrong place. Consider the amount of water, fertilizer and any products applied on or around your shrubs that may impact their health.

15. Why is there a powdery mildew on my Mandevilla or Hibiscus?

Powdery Mildew is a fungal problem that may require treatment with fungicides. Accurate identification of the problem would be needed to provide control recommendations. If you have sooty mold (dark coating on the leaf that will wash off), you may likely have an insect such as aphids, scale or mealy bugs that excrete honeydew. You would need to have those identified for treatment options. Bring a sample to an Ask the Master Gardener Plant Clinic or the Extension Office in your county for identification.

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16. Where can I learn more about Florida-Friendly Landscaping™?

You can attend a Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ for New Residents class on the third Tuesday of each month. The class is free and you can attend from 9 am to 11 am at Colony Cottage Recreation Center or from 1 pm to 3 pm at Rohan Recreation Center.

For obtaining information on obtaining approval for planting Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ on your property, visit www.districtgov.org. You can view the Architectural Review Manual for your particular area, Section 2.11 which provides the guidelines for Florida-friendly landscaping in the community. If you need additional guidance, you may call or visit the Community Standards Department at (352) 751-3912.

17. Where can I learn more about restrictions on landscaping improvements to my property?

The Community Standards department located at 984 Old Mill Run in Lake Sumter Landing will be happy to assist you in completing an Architectural Review Committee Application Form for submittal to the Architectural Review Committee. You can also view your specific Declaration of Restrictions and Architectural Review Manual which will provide you with the guidelines for installing plantings, landscaping walls, curbing and edging by visiting www.DistrictGov.org. For assistance, please contact Community Standards at (352) 751-3912.