

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Home Landscape Recognition Checklist



UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Florida-Friendly
Landscaping™ PROGRAM



By recognizing specific landscapes as Florida-Friendly, the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program honors clients' efforts to conserve water and protect water quality and other natural resources. This checklist is designed to evaluate existing residential landscapes. Page numbers in the right-hand column of the checklist refer to the *Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Handbook for Home Landscapes*. Separate recognition checklists are available for FFL Natural, Commercial & Common Area, and New Construction at ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/recognitions.

To maintain the integrity of the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) program and ensure that FFL Recognized Landscapes have a positive environmental impact, every landscape evaluation is conducted with care and attention to detail. While our goal is to make this process a positive and enjoyable experience for all participants, we strive to make the educational aspects of your site visit our top priority. We emphasize sharing knowledge and practical tips throughout the evaluation to help you create and maintain a sustainable landscape.

There are three levels of FFL recognition — *Silver, Gold, and FFL Natural*. The required practices for *Silver and Gold* recognition are set forth below. The required practices for *FFL Natural* recognition are set forth in a separate checklist (ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/media/fflifasufledu/docs/checklists/CLUE_FFL_Natural_Landscape_Recognition_Checklist_2024.pdf). The FFL Recognition is valid for 36 months from the date of recognition/re-recognition (unless revoked for non-compliance). Please contact ffl-recognition@ifas.ufl.edu for information on how to renew your recognition.

For a landscape to be awarded recognition or re-recognition under the FFL Program, the landscape must be in compliance with the checklist in effect at the time the landscape is evaluated for recognition/re-recognition. The current checklist may be found on the FFL website (ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/about-ffl/landscape-recognition).

The FFL Program reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to award or deny recognition of any landscape. The FFL Program further reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to revoke FFL Recognition if a landscape falls out of compliance with the checklist under which recognition/re-recognition was awarded.

Please note: Landscapes made predominantly of rock, mulch, shell, artificial turf and/or plants, or other similar materials are not eligible for recognition. In addition, landscapes must comply with all city/county/municipality codes, laws, ordinances, and HOA rules (if applicable) at the time of recognition/re-recognition to be eligible for site visit.

Client Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

County: _____ Email: _____ Date: _____

Do you employ a lawn service? Company name _____

If performed, please fill in how often each of the services is performed by resident, company, or HOA:

Mowing _____ Weed Control _____ Fertilizer _____

Pruning _____ Landscape Beds _____ Pest Control _____

Required Practices for Silver Recognitions

(For practices that do not apply, check N/A for the corresponding practice and credit will be given.)

The following practices, when applicable to the landscape being evaluated, are **required for Silver level recognition** (note: in order to achieve Silver level recognition, the landscape must also satisfy the corresponding number of FFL Principles set forth on pages 4-9 in this document).

- **Client confirms that landscape complies with all city/county/municipality codes, laws, ordinances, and HOA rules (if applicable).**
- Landscape does not contain any plants found on the current UF/IFAS Assessment “Prohibited” list. (assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/assessments/?types=24208). **(p. 10)**
- Landscape is not made up predominately of rock, mulch, shell, artificial turf or plants, or other similar materials (these landscapes are not eligible for recognition).
- Most plants are placed in landscape locations that match their requirements for water, light, soil condition, wind tolerance, salt tolerance, mature size, etc. **(pp. 5-15)**
- Landscape contains at least 10 plant species **(p. 5)**.
- At least 25% of landscape plant species (not individual landscape plants) are site appropriate native plants.
- A minimum of approximately 25% of the landscape must contain planted (in ground) beds.
- Spilled fertilizer is collected and disposed of properly. **(p. 31)**
 - *N/A if fertilizer is not used*
- If fertilizer is used, it is not applied when heavy rain is forecast in the next 24 hours. **(p. 31)**
 - *N/A if fertilizer is not used*

- If fertilizer is used, it is applied to turfgrass and landscape beds at less than or equal to the UF/IFAS-recommended rate. **(pp. 32-34)**
 - *N/A if fertilizer is not used*
- An FFL recommended mulch is applied to landscape beds at a depth of 2-3" after settling and pulled away from the base of all plants. **(p. 37-38)**
- Volcano mulching is not practiced on site. **(p. 38)**
- Plant beds are not mulched with inorganic materials (rock, pebbles, shell, rubber, etc.) or cypress mulch. **(pp. 37-38)**
- If the property is located on a waterfront (including stormwater pond), a low-maintenance zone of at least 10 ft (more if required by the city or county) has been established around the water body. No mowing, pesticides, fertilizer, or irrigation is applied in this zone. **(p. 67)**
 - *N/A if not on a waterfront*
- If pesticide is used, only affected plants and turf areas are treated with pesticide applications (spot treatments). **(p. 46)**
 - *N/A if pesticide is not used*
- Downspouts drain into landscaped areas or pervious surfaces. **(p. 62)**
 - *N/A if no gutter system*
- Combination products containing fertilizer or mulch and pesticides together are not used. **(p. 31)**

Irrigation system:

- *N/A - If irrigation system is not present, not in working condition, or not regularly used (during drought conditions only). Credit given for all practices under this heading.*
 - Irrigation system is calibrated to apply ½" to ¾" of water per application. **(p. 23)**
 - A functioning automatic rainfall shutoff device is maintained on in-ground irrigation systems. **(p. 25)**

Turfgrass:

- *N/A - If turfgrass is not present. Credit given for all practices under this heading.*
 - Turf is mowed at the UF/IFAS-recommended height for the grass species. **(p. 14)**
 - Grass clippings are left on the lawn after mowing or collected and used as mulch or added to a compost pile. **(pp. 15 & 53)**
- *N/A - If fertilizer is not used. Credit given for all practices under this heading.*
 - Fertilizer is only applied when grass is actively growing and according to local fertilizer ordinances. **(pp. 31-32)**

Aesthetics:

- Plants are not overgrown. **(p. 9)**
- Plants do not show signs of decline (untreated diseased, infested, or dead plants). **(p. 11)**
- Appropriate pruning practices are utilized **(pp. 53-56)**
- There are defined and maintained (routinely weeded and mulched) landscape beds.
- Landscape and household debris are disposed of properly or recycled.

Required Practices for Gold Recognitions

(For practices that do not apply, check N/A for the corresponding practice and credit will be given.)

The following practices are **required for Gold level recognition** (note: in order to achieve Gold level recognition, the landscape must also satisfy all silver level requirements and the FFL Principles set forth on pages 4-9 in this document).

- Landscape does not contain any plants found on the current UF/IFAS Assessment “Prohibited, Invasive, Invasive (No Uses), or High Invasion Risk” list. (assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/assessments/?types=25451,1080,1074,24208). **(p. 10)**
- Landscape contains at least 15 plant species.
- At least 40% of landscape plant species (not individual plants) are site appropriate native plants.
- **All** plants are placed in landscape locations that match their requirements for water, light, soil condition, wind tolerance, salt tolerance, mature size, etc. **(pp. 5-15)**
- 90% of roof runoff (with or without downspouts) drains onto lawn or landscaped areas, pervious surfaces, drainage swales, or is harvested in rain barrels or rain gardens. **(pp. 61-62)**
- *N/A - irrigation system is not present, not in working condition, or not regularly used.*
 - Not more than 50% of the irrigation system (by area) is high-volume.
 - Spray and rotor heads are installed in separate zones.
 - Microirrigation (drip, micro-spray emitters, microbubblers) is installed and maintained in plant and flower beds. **(p. 24)**

Florida-Friendly Landscape Practices

FFL Principle #1: Right Plant, Right Place	Yes
Trees and shrubs are positioned to improve the building's heating and cooling capacity if space allows. (p. 5)	
Maintained turfgrass is used for functional purposes (e.g., play area, erosion control, and nutrient uptake). (p. 9)	
Erosion prone areas are managed to minimize erosion.	
Shrubs and groundcovers are used where grass is difficult to maintain. (p. 9)	
Main leaders of all shrubs are located out from under the eaves (overhang) of the building. (p. 11)	
Prior to installing new plants, a pH soil test has been performed. (p. 7)	
Trees are located appropriate distance from the foundation of house based on mature size. (p. 11)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #1 <i>(must receive 4 for Silver or 5 for Gold)</i>	

FFL Principle #2: Water Efficiently	Yes
Please check "yes" if the site does NOT have an in-ground irrigation system, the system is not used, or not in working order. Credit will be given for all 6 irrigation practices. Enter 6 in the yellow row below.	
Turfgrass and landscape plants are irrigated only as needed according to UF/IFAS recommendations and in compliance with any existing watering restrictions. (p. 22)	
Irrigation systems are operated manually as opposed to running automatically. (p.22)	
A smart controller (evapotranspiration, soil moisture sensor, or similar) is installed and operational. (p.25)	
Separate irrigation zones for turf and landscape plants are maintained.	
Microirrigation is installed and maintained in plant and flower beds. (pp. 23-24)	
The irrigation system is maintained seasonally to adjust spray patterns and repair clogs and leaks. (p. 22)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #2 <i>(must receive 3 for Silver and 4 for Gold)</i>	

FFL Principle #3: Fertilize Appropriately	Yes
Please check “yes” if fertilizer is NOT used in this landscape. Credit will be given for satisfying all 4 fertilizer practices. Enter 4 in the yellow row below.	
A soil nutrient test has been performed prior to applying fertilizer. (p. 30)	
No supplemental fertilization (except for palms) is used in the landscape once plants are established or if plants are performing poorly or nutrient deficiencies are detected. (p. 29)	
A broadcast spreader with an operational deflector shield is used to apply fertilizer. (p. 31)	
Fertilizer contains at least 30% slow-release nitrogen unless otherwise specified by county or city code. (p. 30)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #3 <i>(must receive 2 for Silver or 3 for Gold)</i>	

FFL Principle #4: Mulch	Yes
Self-mulching areas exist under trees where leaves can remain as they fall or raked under the tree drip line. (p. 57)	
A FFL recommended mulch is pulled away 1"-2" from trees and shrubs.	
Not more than 25% of the landscape is open areas of mulch.	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #4 <i>(must receive 1 for Silver and 2 for Gold)</i>	

Notes

FFL Principle #5: Attract Wildlife	Yes
There is plant material that provides habitat, shelter and/or food sources for wildlife. (pp. 41-42)	
Host and nectar plants are present for butterflies, hummingbirds and/or other pollinators. (p. 42)	
A water source for wildlife exists in the landscape. (p. 41)	
Wildlife shelters exist and are maintained in the landscape (e.g., bird or bat houses, snags, brush piles, etc.) (pp. 41-42)	
The landscape includes a variety of trees, shrubs and groundcovers that increase vertical layering (layers of vegetation). (p. 41)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle # 5 <i>(must receive 3 for Silver or 4 for Gold)</i>	

FFL Principle #6: Manage Yard Pests Responsibly	Yes
Please check “yes” if pesticide is NOT used in the landscape. Credit will be given for all 5 pesticide practices. Enter 5 in the yellow row below.	
The least toxic method of pest control is used first. (p. 46)	
Homeowner is able to properly identify pest and disease issues in their landscape or has brought samples to their local Extension office.	
If chemical treatment is necessary, homeowner uses spot treatments. (p. 46)	
Landscape is checked every 1-2 weeks for signs of pest damage. (pp. 45-46)	
Integrated Pest Management is used for insects and disease whenever possible. (pp. 45-46)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #6 <i>(must receive 3 for Silver and 4 for Gold)</i>	

Notes

FFL Principle #7: Recycle	Yes
Compost pile or worm bin is installed (if permitted by HOA) or community compost bin is available for use. (pp. 57-58)	
Landscape debris is composted or placed at curb for horticultural recycling.	
Landscape waste (tree trimmings, fallen leaves, pine needles) is used on site (if permitted by HOA). (p. 57)	
If palms are present, they are not over pruned (above 9 and 3 o'clock). (p.55)	
Hedges are pruned to be wider at the bottom than at the top. (p. 56)	
Shrubs are primarily pruned with hand shears. (p. 56)	
When tree branches are pruned, they are pruned outside the branch collar. (p. 53)	
If trees are pruned professionally, select a company that employs a certified arborist is selected. (p. 56)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #7 <i>(must receive 5 for Silver and 6 for Gold)</i>	

FFL Principle #8: Reduce Stormwater Runoff	Yes
At least 25% of hardscape surfaces are pervious to water penetration.	
Pollutants such as pet waste and car oil are cleaned up so that they do not end up in storm drains. (p. 61)	
A cistern, rain barrel or other water harvesting practice is used (if permitted by HOA) with proper mosquito prevention techniques in place. (p.63)	
Rain gardens, swales, and berms are used to catch and filter stormwater runoff. (pp. 61-62)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #8 <i>(must receive 1 for Silver and 2 for Gold)</i>	

Notes

FFL Principles #9: Protect the Waterfront	Yes
Please check "yes" if the property is NOT on a waterfront (stormwater ponds are considered waterfront). Credit will be given for all 3 waterfront practices. Enter 3 in the yellow row below.	
Shoreline (riparian zone and littoral zones) is kept free of invasive plant material. (p. 67)	
Seawalls, rip rap, or gabions are used where appropriate to control erosion. (p. 67)	
The 10' low-maintenance zone is planted with site appropriate Florida native plants. (p. 67)	
Number of Requirements Met for Principle #9 <i>(must meet 1 for Silver and 2 for Gold)</i>	

Notes

FFL Recognitions Results:

Chart 1: REQUIREMENTS (Check yes or no)	Yes	No
All SILVER requirements met? (p. 2-3 in this document)		
All GOLD requirements met? (p. 3 in this document)		
Requirement Result (as long as practices are met in Chart 2) <i>If Silver equals No: No recognition</i> <i>If Silver equals Yes and Gold equals No: Silver recognition only</i> <i>If both Silver and Gold equal yes: Gold recognition</i>		

Chart 2: FFL PRACTICES	FFL Practices met by client per section	Number of Silver Practices for recognition	Number of Gold Practices for recognition
#1 Right Plant Right Place		4	5
#2 Water Efficiently		3	4
#3 Fertilize Appropriately		2	3
#4 Mulch		1	2
#5 Attract Wildlife		3	4
#6 Manage Yard Pests Responsibly		3	4
#7 Recycle		5	6
#8 Reduce Stormwater Runoff		1	2
#9 Protect the Waterfront		1	2
Recognition Level Based on FFL Practices:			

Recognition Level Awarded*: _____ Silver _____ Gold _____ None <i>*Recognition Level Awarded must reflect both Chart 1 and Chart 2 – Chart 1 level achieved indicates the highest level possible as long as Chart 2 practices are met to that level.</i>

Visit Information

Date of current recognition visit: _____

Is this a re-recognition? Yes No

Date of last recognition if applicable (N/A if first recognition): _____

Review Team Members Present: _____

Reviewed by Extension staff member: _____ Date: _____

County Agent: _____ Email: _____

County: _____

Entered into the Digital Checklist? Yes No Date: _____

Date certificate and follow-up email sent: _____

If recognized, was a landscape flag/sign purchase link issued? Yes No Date: _____

Is the applicant a Master Gardener? Yes No

Release

The Review Team Members may take photos of your landscape while evaluating it for FFL Recognition Status. By asking to have your landscape recognized, you are granting The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program (FFL) the right to use photos and project information gathered by the Review Team Members in publications or other media material produced by FFL including but not limited to: brochures, invitations, books, newspapers, magazines, websites, etc.

If you agree to the above statement, please sign below:

Signature: _____

Written Name: _____ Date: _____

Landscape Advisor: Upon completion of this form, please use the digital checklist to submit it for processing. Only landscape visits submitted through the digital checklist will be recorded.

For further instructions and follow-up procedures, please check the Landscape Advisor's Manual (LAM).

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