

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Natural 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 landscapes. Separate recognition checklists are available for FFL Residential Silver and Gold, 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 *FFL Natural Level* recognition are set forth below. The required practices for *FFL Silver* and *Gold* recognition are set forth in a separate checklist (UF/IFAS Extension Florida-Friendly Landscaping Home Landscape Recognition Checklist). 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.

All practices put forth in this checklist are required for FFL Natural recognition. Landscapes not awarded FFL Natural recognition may be eligible for other recognition types or levels.

Client Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

County: _____

Do you employ a lawn service? Company name _____

If performed, please fill in how often each of the services is performed:

Mowing _____ Weed Control _____ Pruning _____

Landscape Beds _____ Pest Management _____

To achieve certification under the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program's Natural, all of the following criteria must be met:

FFL Principle #1: Right Plant, Right Place

- Client confirms that landscape complies with all codes, laws, ordinances, and HOA rules (as applicable).
- Plants do not show signs of decline (untreated diseased, infested, overgrown, or dead plants).
- 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).
- Most plants are placed in landscape locations that match their requirements for water, light, soil condition, wind tolerance, salt tolerance, mature size, etc.
- Landscape contains at least 15 different plant species.
- At least 75% of landscape plant species are site appropriate plants native to Florida.
- A soil pH test is performed when installing new plants or within the last two years.
- If turfgrass is present, it is used for functional purposes (e.g., play area, erosion control, and nutrient uptake).

Principle #2: Water Efficiently

- The landscape is not regularly watered, from any source, once established.
- If an irrigation system is present, it is turned off.
- Only when the landscape shows indications of severe drought stress is the landscape watered by hand or the irrigation system is operated manually.
- Homeowner/landscape manager must be able to describe conditions in which supplemental watering may be necessary.

Principle #3: Fertilize Appropriately

- No supplemental nutrients are added to the landscape. **Compost amendments are acceptable at the time of planting.*

Principle #4: Mulch

- A 2–3-inch layer of a Florida-Friendly mulch is applied and maintained over bare ground and in plant beds.

Principle #5: Attract Wildlife

- There is a diversity of plant material that provides habitat, shelter, and food sources for wildlife (e.g., pollinator-attractive flowers, larval host plants, a combination of groundcovers, herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees).
- Human-made shelters and feeders for insects and wildlife are maintained according to UF/IFAS recommendations.
- A water source for wildlife exists in the landscape. *The landscape manager must maintain the water source according to UF/IFAS recommendations.*
- There are a variety of trees, shrubs and groundcovers that provide habitat for wildlife i.e., vertical layering.
- No outdoor cats. Other domestic pets are managed with wildlife in mind.

Principle #6: Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

- The homeowner/landscape manager practices Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- If the landscape is managed by a professional, pesticide and other chemical use records and programs must be provided.
- When chemical tools are needed, the landscape manager uses the least toxic method first.
- Chemicals that target nuisance insects, plant diseases, plants, and wildlife are used only when absolutely necessary.
- Only affected plants and turf areas are treated with chemical applications (spot treatments).

Principle #7: Recycle

- Landscape waste (i.e. tree trimmings, fallen leaves, grass clippings, pine needles, etc.), when possible, is used on site and/or properly composted.
- If present, turfgrass is mowed at the UF/IFAS-recommended height for the grass species.
- If necessary, plants and trees are pruned according to UF/IFAS recommendations.
- If palms are pruned, only dead fronds are removed.

Principle #8: Reduce Stormwater Runoff

- Where possible use pervious materials. At least 25% of the hardscape (driveways, walkways, patios/decks) surfaces to be pervious.
- Pollutants such as pet waste and car oils are cleaned up so that they do not end up in storm drains.
- At least 90% of roof runoff drains onto landscaped areas, pervious surfaces, drainage swale, or is harvested in rain barrels or rain garden.
- Turfgrass or groundcovers are used in erosion prone areas, as applicable.

Principle #9: Protect the Waterfront

(If the landscape is not on the waterfront, credit can be given for all practices).

- A low-maintenance zone of at least 10 ft. has been established around the water body. No mowing, pesticides, fertilizer, or irrigation water is applied in this zone.
- At least 50% of the shoreline is planted with 100% site appropriate native plants.
- Shoreline (riparian zone and littoral zones) is kept free of invasive plant material.

Visit Information

Date this recognition was performed: _____

Previous Review date (if applicable): _____

Review Team Members Present: _____

Reviewed by Extension staff member: _____

Date: _____ County: _____

Entered into the FFL Database? Yes No Date: _____

Date certificate with cover letter issued: _____

Was a landscape flag/sign issued? Yes No Date: _____

Is the applicant a Master Gardener? Yes No

Photo Release

Were photos taken by the Review Team Members? Yes No

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 photo 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: _____