

# Yard Certification Checklist

Does your yard measure up?

Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FY&N) honors model landscapes as certified Florida-Friendly Yards.

**To be certified as Florida Yard, your landscape must:**

- Collect at least 36 inches on this Yardstick Checklist
- Receive full points for practices marked with 2 asterisks\*\*
- Receive partial credit for practices marked with 1 asterisk\*
- Comply with all existing codes and laws

## Water Efficiently

- Mow lawns high to encourage a deeper, more drought and pest tolerant root system. \*\* 2"
- Irrigate lawn and landscape only when they wilt. Apply << 3/4 inches water per application. 3"

*For a yard that uses an irrigation system (in-ground or hose-end sprinklers):*

- Calibrate irrigation/sprinkler system to apply << 3/4 inches of water. \*\* 3"
- Put a rain gauge in your yard to track irrigation amounts. \*\* 2"
- Install a rain shut-off device for in-ground irrigation systems. \*\* 2"
- Make sure irrigation system waters lawn areas separately from plant beds. 2"
- Use drip or micro-irrigation in plant and flower beds. 2"

*For a yard that does not use an irrigation system:*

- Design and maintain a landscape that exists predominantly on rainfall once plants are established. 6"

## Mulch

- Maintain a 2-3" layer of organic mulch over tree roots, shrubs and plant beds, leaving a 2 inch space between the plant base and the mulch. \* 2"
- Create self-mulching areas under trees where leaves can remain as they fall. 1"
- Use by-product mulches such as pine bark, melaleuca or recycled mulches. 1"
- Replenish mulch once or twice a year to maintain 2-3" depth. 1"

## Recycle

- Whenever possible, recycle grass clippings by allowing them to remain on the lawn. \*\* 2"
- Use leaves and pine needles found in your yard as mulch. 2"
- Create and maintain a compost pile with yard clippings, leaves, kitchen scraps, etc. 3"

## Wildlife

- Plant vines, shrubs, and trees that provide cover, nesting areas or food sources for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. 3"
- Provide a water source, such as a bird bath or a small pond for wildlife. 1"
- Provide wildlife shelters such as a bat house, bird house, brush pile, etc. 1"
- Identify five kinds of wildlife (insects, reptile, birds, etc.) that live in your yard. 2"

## Yard Pests

- Treat only affected plants or lawn areas with pesticide applications. Avoid indiscriminate spraying. \*\* 3"
- Check your landscape every 1-2 weeks for signs of problems. 2"
- Learn to identify 5 beneficial insects that provide natural control of harmful pests. 2"
- Use environmentally friendly pesticides such as horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps. 2"
- Use non-chemical approaches to pest control, such as pruning off affected areas, hand removing insects, etc., whenever possible. 3"

## Right Plant - Right Place

Ensure that your landscape does not contain plants identified by legal code as invasive exotics, such as Brazilian Pepper, Melaleuca, Australian Pine, and Chinese Tallow.**	2"
Replace problem-prone plants with low maintenance native or non-native species.	2"
Group plants according to their water and maintenance needs.	2"
Determine how much grass you need for children, pets, and recreation. Replace the rest with low maintenance ground covers, shrubs, mulch, or other porous surfaces.	3"
Use trees and shrubs to shade eastern and western walls of home and air conditioner compressor.	1"
Use deciduous trees on southern exposures to allow the sun to passively heat your home in winter.	1"
Reduce yard waste by choosing plants that will not require frequent pruning at maturity.	1"
Preserve native plants when building on a new site. Maintain a protective "do not disturb" barrier under the dripline of trees.	3"

## Fertilizing

Fertilize as needed to maintain quality of lawns and landscape plants. *	2"
Use natural organic or other slow release fertilizers. *	2"
Use iron instead of nitrogen to make your lawn green during the summer.	1"

## Stormwater Runoff

Direct downspouts and gutters to drain onto the lawn, plant beds, or containment areas. *	1"
Plant groundcovers or use mulch on thinly vegetated areas to decrease erosion. *	2"
Use mulch, bricks, flagstones, gravel, or other porous surfaces on walkways, patios or drives.	1"
Collect and use rainwater to irrigate plants.	2"
Create swales or terracing to catch and filter stormwater.	3"
Pick up after pets to reduce bacterial and nutrient pollution in stormdrain systems.	1"
Clean up oil spills and leaks using cat litter on driveways.	2"
Sweep grass clippings, fertilizer, and soil from driveway onto lawn. Remove trash from street gutters.	2"

## On the Waterfront

Remove invasive exotic aquatic plants by cutting, pulling, or raking. Remove dead plant material from water after using herbicides to reduce pollution.	2"
Protect your mangroves. All pruning must be in compliance with existing laws. **	2"
Establish a border of low maintenance plants between your lawn and shoreline/seawall to absorb nutrients and to provide wildlife habitat.	2"
Establish a 10-30foot "no fertilizer" zone along your shoreline.	2"
Where feasible, plant native vegetation in the littoral zone in front of your seawall or along shoreline.	4"
Decrease wave action and increase habitat by placing clean, native limestone rock in front of your seawall.	3"

TOTAL INCHES \_\_\_\_\_

If your yard measures up, call your local Cooperative Extension Service and ask for a Florida Yard Adviser.