

How You Can Help...

Landscaping For The Bay

Be a friend to the bay and plant the native way. Landscaping with native and other drought-tolerant plants helps conserve precious water, requires fewer chemicals, and costs less to maintain. Conserving limited water resources also reduces stress on freshwater supplies in rivers that nourish fish and wildlife downstream. Less chemical maintenance of lawns and exotic plants ultimately means less pollution in the bay.

Making the transition can be easy and rewarding. Begin with a plan, then proceed in stages.

Reduce water-thirsty lawn areas by increasing plant beds, natural areas, and ground covers.

For assistance, contact your local chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, cooperative extension service, or the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

More Earth-Friendly Yard Tips:

- Mow grass frequently so that no more than 1/3 of the blade is clipped at one time. This produces small blades that sift down into the turf and are less likely to be carried away by surface water. Cutting too low leaves the lawn susceptible to stress and disease.
- Don't bag grass clippings. Left on the ground, clippings are an excellent fertilizer. Inexpensive mulching blades, available for many brand-name lawnmowers, provide a smart option for homeowners who want to reduce yard waste and dependence on lawn chemicals.
- Establish a compost pile for yard refuse to turn leaves and grass clippings into rich, organic fertilizer and mulch. Build a bin with wood or wire, or purchase a compost unit at a local hardware store. Mix two parts grass clippings to one part leaves to achieve a carbon/nitrogen ratio ideal for 'cooking' the pile. Turn the pile frequently and keep it moist to speed decomposition.

Free mulch can be obtained from some cities and counties that recycle yard waste. Contact your local solid waste department to inquire.