



**Best Practices for a Greener Jupiter Inlet Colony**

A Colony Garden Club Guide to  
*Florida-Friendly*  
*Landscaping™*

**Spring 2016**



**JIC's infrastructure** project brings a new sewer system, storm drainage, water pipes, and roads. It will significantly improve Town services and cut 82 percent of the dirty water from road run off from entering the Loxahatchee and Indian Rivers and the Jupiter Inlet.

Throughout the planning, Mayor Dan Comerford has articulated a key goal: **Make JIC the Greenest Town in Florida.** He is obtaining cost-reducing government grants to help us achieve that vision. JIC gardeners can help reach that goal by following best practices in this Guide.

Drawing on the University of Florida Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program, these tips can *simplify your gardening, save you money on water, pesticide, and fertilizer use, protect your health, and protect our important natural resources.*

We hope the Guide gets our entire community thinking 'green' and promotes collaboration between you and your lawn-care service provider.  
**Please share this Guide and its links to more detailed resources.**

Special thanks to Laurie Albrecht, University of Florida Extension Service, and Mike Renda, Blowing Rocks/The Nature Conservancy, for their advice and support.

Marie Etherington, President  
Colony Garden Club  
Spring 2016





# Are you a Florida-Friendly green gardener?

## Take this quick quiz to find out!

(Or click through to proceed directly to the Guide!)

### 1. Which of the following are invasive plants and should be avoided in landscaping plans? Please circle.

Old World Sword Fern	Lather leaf
Melaleuca	Mexican Petunia
Carrotwood	Shefflera

**All six are invasive.** The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council lists 77 Category 1 species that alter native plant communities by displacing them, changing community structures or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives. Fast-growing carrotwood, spread by birds, now threatens native plants in Blowing Rocks Preserve and Jonathan Dickenson State Park.

### 2. True or False: The best time to water is right after dark.

**False.** Very early morning is best so plants aren't wet overnight which can cause disease. Never water during the day. You'll lose much of the water to evaporation.



### 3. In 2009, the Florida legislature began promoting nine Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Principles to encourage sustainable landscaping by residents and municipalities. Which of the following is NOT one of the nine Principles?

- A) Recycle
- B) Reduce storm water runoff
- C) Protect the waterfront
- D) Use only licensed landscape services

**If you chose D, you're correct.** The FFL Principles don't weigh in on licensing or accreditation. JIC only requires that all service providers to be registered with the Town. Florida requires that pest control services have a license from the State.

### 4. When mowing the lawn, which of the following is NOT a best practice?

- A) Never mow more than one-third of the leaf blade at a time.
- B) Don't blow grass clippings into streets or waterways.
- C) Always remove grass clippings from the lawn.
- D) Don't mow wet turf, as it can cause fungus and disease

**Letter C — removing clippings — is NOT a best practice.** Leave those clippings on the lawn! They provide important nutrients that can save you from fertilizing.

*(Continued on next page)*



**5. True or False: The best time to fertilize is before a heavy rain.**

**FALSE:** If you need to fertilize (and many Floridians way over fertilizer their lawns) never do it before a rain to prevent run off into our waterways. Also, avoid “weed and feed” products. Read on to learn why.

**6. TRUE OR FALSE: All palms should be pruned in late spring to reduce wind residence in case of a hurricane.**

**FALSE.** Not all palms require pruning. Varieties with crownshafts such as anonidia, royal palms, and bottle palms don’t need pruning — their fronds will fall off naturally when ready. Palms without crownshafts should be pruned at “3 and 9 o’clock” says Laurie Albrecht. “Never remove green fronds from your sabal palms. This invites disease, weakens the trunk, and removes habitat for songbirds, frogs, bats and anoles.” For more, go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep443>.

**7. TRUE OR FALSE: When doing routine yard maintenance, it’s good practice to rake leaves into the hedge rows.**

**TRUE!** Leaves are great mulch. They prevent soil erosion, retain moisture, and inhibit weed growth. If you don’t like the look of leaves in your hedge row (and really, what’s not to like) add a layer of mulch on top of them. You’ll create yummy compost!

**8. Integrated Pest Management is:**

- A) A system for cross breeding pests so that they cancel out each other’s damage
- B) A holistic approach to eradicating pests that emphasizes proper planning and plant maintenance and natural or low- toxic controls.
- C) A system of alternating synthetic pesticide and herbicide applications in order to increase effectiveness of pest control.

**B is correct.** This approach is strongly encouraged by the state of Florida. Ask your service provider if he or she practices it. Keep reading to learn more.

**8. If you spot a black racer snake in your garden, you should:**

- A) Chase it away.
- B) Calm down and call JIC Police
- C) Thank it and let it be.

**The Answer is C!** Never kill a Black Racer. Or any other snake. Black racers aren’t poisonous and are your garden’s friends. They eat mosquitoes and other insects, moles, lizards, rodents and some frogs. They are known to improve landscapes because they remove pests that are detrimental to gardens. If you can’t learn to love them, at least leave them alone. Check the JIC website for Florida snake identification: <http://jupiterinletcolony.org>.

**How did you score?**

**100%? Green thumbs up to you!**

If you got 6 or fewer incorrect, read on to learn more about Florida-Friendly Gardening practices.

# Dear JIC Residents:

Our success in obtaining government grants to help pay for our infrastructure improvements is in part tied to our ability to become a greener community. In 2009, Florida issued science-based guidance for homeowners called the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program.



**These nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles** — Right plant, right place • Water efficiently • Fertilize appropriately • Mulch • Attract wildlife • Manage yard pests responsibly • Recycle yard waste • Reduce storm water runoff • Protect the waterfront — are easy to implement.

As you read this Guide, you may note areas in which residents aren't compliant. This doesn't worry me. It's all about education. You may have an invasive growing in your garden and not know it. You may be still spraying for a pest we haven't had in JIC for years. You may not even be aware that the UF/IFAS has published these nine useful Principles.

**You might wonder: if these principles are so important, why doesn't JIC mandate them?** Our Commission believes that we need fewer rules and more awareness. We think that our residents want to do the right thing once they know what it is.

We assume that if you know you've got a Category One invasive in your garden, you'll remove it. That you'll discuss your needs and preferences with your landscape service provider so that you're not shocked to find RoundUp used where your kids play, or that you're not billed for services that harm our environment and waste money.

This Guide puts you in the know — and in the driver's seat. Our Garden Club, experts at the University of Florida/IFAS Extension and the Mounts Botanical Garden can offer guidance on how to apply these Principles.

On behalf of the JIC Commissioners, I thank you for your cooperation and salute Mrs. Etherington and the Garden Club for taking the lead in this important initiative.

Mayor Dan Comerford.



# Principle #1: Right Plant, Right Place

**Main Idea:** *don't waste time, energy, and money caring for a plant that is not adapted to the spot where it's planted.*

The plants you choose determine how much maintenance your landscape will require and also how long it will last. Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ guidelines offer plants in many colors, textures, and styles to use in South Florida gardens. See UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Plant List (<http://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu>).



- **Choose low-maintenance plants suited to your site.** Once these plants are established in the right location, most require little, if any, supplemental water, fertilizer, or pesticides.
- **Group plants according to water requirements.** Drought-tolerant plants may thrive on elevated dry spots or in windy areas, but quickly succumb to root diseases and pest problems in wet areas. Place plants adapted to wet soils in low spots, along waterways, and in areas with poor drainage.
- **Consider size.** Most plants are not full-grown when purchased. Know how large a plant will grow before purchasing it and give it enough room to grow. Consider buying dwarf species for smaller spaces to reduce pruning needs and overcrowding.
- **Aim for diversity.** Create a mosaic of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, native grasses, and wildflowers. Monocultures—large expanses of the same plant species—can be prone to disease and insect infestation.
- **Keep grass useful.** Plan turf areas for functionality and easy maintenance. Define planting bed edges and shapes to make mowing easy. Turfgrass thrives in sunny areas, but not in dense shade. In shady spots where grass is difficult to maintain, use groundcovers.
- **Welcome wildlife.** Provide flowering and fruiting plants to bring birds and butterflies into your yard.
- **Position trees and shrubs strategically.** Let them naturally cool or heat your home. Tree shade can reduce air conditioning costs significantly. An air-conditioning system's outdoor compressor/condenser unit uses less energy when it is shaded from direct sun during the day—be careful not to block the unit's airflow.
- **Consider wind tolerance.** Certain trees are less wind-tolerant than others, and are more likely to be damaged or blow over in severe weather. For sturdy trees check <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>.
- **Eliminate invasive plants.** They aggressively out-compete native plants, contributing to habitat loss. Learn to identify problematic plants and dispose of them carefully.
- **Buy quality plants.** Choose the healthiest plants you can find. Slip plants out of pots to inspect roots. Diseased roots are brown to black and often have a rotting odor. Roots growing in a circle inside the pot indicate a plant left in the pot too long.
- **Cope with a slope.** Use groundcovers where grass is difficult to maintain.

## Principle #2: Water Efficiently

Many Floridians overwater. Overwatering depletes the water supply, costs you money and makes plants more prone to disease and pests.

**Follow these tips:**



- **Remember, right plant for the right place!** Go for natives and drought-resistant plants.
- **Water early in the morning.**
- **Hand water potted plants, shrubs, trees, vegetables, and flower beds.** You'll use less water and have more control.
- **Calibrate your irrigation system.** Even an efficient system wastes water if runs too long. The ideal amount of water to apply is 1/2 - 3/4 inch per cycle.
- **Perform regular irrigation system maintenance.** Check for leaks; unclog and replace broken heads. Point heads at plants, not driveways and sidewalks.
- **Prune plants that interfere with irrigation systems.**
- **Make a rain barrel to capture rainwater that flows off your roof.** It's easy and inexpensive.
- **Use micro-irrigation systems that apply water directly to the roots of plants, where it's needed.**
- **Mulch plants and trees to retain moisture.** See Principle # 4.
- **Mow correctly.** How you mow has a big impact on how much water your lawn needs. Don't remove more than one-third of the grass blade at each mowing. Mowing high results in deeper roots, which develops drought tolerance and saves on irrigation.
- **Don't irrigate if it has rained or rain is forecast in the next 24 hours.** Use a rain gauge to track how much rain quantity.
- **Install a rain shut-off device or moisture sensor to override your irrigation system when it's raining.** This is the law.
- **Spot-treat lawn pest problems.** Chemicals can damage and stress the grass and increase its need for water. For more information on caring for your lawn, see <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>
- **Follow JIC's water restrictions set by the South Florida Water Management District:** <http://www.sfwmd.gov>.
- **Even if it is your assigned day to irrigate, that doesn't mean you should.** Look to your plants for telltale signs of water stress.



For more on watering practices, go to <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>.



## Principle #3: Fertilize Appropriately

**It's not always necessary to fertilize.** Many Florida homeowners over-fertilize, overspend, and overload our waterways with excess nitrogen and phosphorous, causing harm to our marine ecosystem.

“Too much fertilizer can weaken a plant, promote disease, invite pests, waste your money and harm the environment. It can mean more pruning and mowing,” says UF’s Laurie Albrecht. “Plants have varying nutrient needs, depending on the species. Consider your plants’ needs carefully before applying any fertilizer, and always follow label directions when applying.”

**Fertilizer is a powerful tool. To apply correctly, follow these steps:**



- **Always follow UF/IFAS recommendations.** Ideal rates, application timings, and formulas are different for different plants. Go to <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>.
- **Choose fertilizers with slow-release nutrients.** They should include potassium and little or no phosphorus.
- **Keep fertilizer off hard surfaces and sweep up spills on lawns and driveways.** Don't rinse or let fertilizers wash into storm drains!
- **Never fertilize within 10 feet of any water body.** Designate a 10-foot maintenance-free zone between your landscape and the normal high water mark.
- **Don't fertilize before a heavy rain forecast.** Fertilizer can leach into groundwater, contributing to pollution.
- **Apply fertilizer to lawns only when grass is actively growing.** Many Florida turfgrasses go dormant in winter.
- **Use a broadcast spreader.** Drop spreaders can damage the coatings on slow-release fertilizers, rendering them quick release.
- **Do not use 'weed and feed' products for three reasons.** They contain herbicides and fertilizer together that can injure some trees and shrubs if misapplied. Two, pesticides should only be applied to affected areas, rather than broadcast over the entire yard as occurs when using “weed and feed” products. Three, the appropriate timing is often different.





## Principle #4: Mulch Appropriately



### A mulch layer provides many benefits because it:

- Buffers soil temperature keeping soils and plant roots warmer in winter and cooler in summer.
- Helps maintain moisture by slowing evaporation, therefore reducing water requirements.
- Inhibits weed germination and growth.
- Adds beauty and accents the landscape.
- Helps reduce soil erosion.
- Improves soil by adding organic matter.
- Protects plants. Mulch can help prevent certain plant diseases, and when placed around shrubs and trees (at least 12 to 18 inches from the trunk), it reduces the likelihood of damage from trimmers and mowers.

### When choosing mulch, consider these factors:

- **Cypress, melaleuca, and pine bark are long lasting mulch but don't offer many nutrients when they break down.** Melaleuca mulch, made from the invasive trees, is cured at a high temperature to kill seeds.
- **Eucalyptus mulch typically comes from South and Central Florida where the trees are grown specifically for mulch.** They grow quickly, so this mulch is considered renewable.
- **Pine bark is a byproduct of the forest industry.** It comes in ground and nugget forms, and has a rich brown color. Pine straw (pine needles) comes from pine plantations. Unlike some mulch, pine needles are not likely to wash away, because they knit together.
- **Fallen leaves and grass clippings are high in nutrients.** While they decompose quickly, they're free!
- **Mixed hardwood mulch is produced from scrap lumber, recycled pallets, or tree stems that are too small to be used for paper or wood production.**
- **Utility mulch is sold or given away by utility companies.** It comes from trimming trees that get in the way of power lines, but it can come with weed seeds.
- **Cypress mulch can be from Cypress trees that grow in Florida's forested wetlands.** The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program does not recommend the use of cypress mulch, as its origins may be difficult to determine.



### Follow these tips when mulching:

- **Maintain a 2- to 3-inch layer around established trees, shrubs, and bedding plants.** Adding more mulch can harm plants because mulch intercepts rain and irrigation meant for plants' root systems.
- **Do not mulch to the curb, sidewalk, or water's edge.** Organic mulches eventually degrade and release their nutrients. They may also wash into storm drains or water bodies.
- **Avoid "volcano mulching."** When mulch is piled against the base of a tree, it holds moisture, encouraging rot. Mulch piled against the trunks of young trees may also create habitat for rodents that chew the tender bark and can ultimately kill the trees.
- **Rake or aerate old mulch that's matted.**

For more advice, go to <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

## Principle #5: Attract Wildlife

Wildlife is good for your garden! It helps maintain Florida's unique ecosystem. Sadly, rapid development is destroying our wildlife habitat. This is especially true in Florida's coastal areas.

**Create a sanctuary for wildlife. (Your garden will thank you!)**



- **Use a variety of plants to attract different species — from birds and butterflies to snakes and squirrels.** When your landscaping is a refuge for critters in need of shade, rest, food, and water, your yard will have fewer flies, mosquitoes and other insects.
- **Select plants with seeds, fruit, foliage, or flowers that butterflies, birds, and other wildlife like to eat.** Berries, fleshy fruits, nuts, and acorns are all treats for many animals.
- **Supply fresh water. Install a fountain or birdbath.** Change water regularly to prevent mosquito breeding and bacterial contamination.
- **Leave the trunks of dead trees so birds can perch, nest, and feed.** Don't overprune your sabal (cabbage) palms or remove green fronds: doing so invites disease, weakens the trunk, and removes habitat for songbirds.
- **Manage your pets. Keep cats inside to protect birds.**
- **Reduce insecticide use.** Pesticides kill many beneficial insects such as lady beetles, green lacewings, bees, and parasitic wasps. Insecticides reduce an important food source for birds.
- **Reduce the amount of mowed lawn.** Unmowed areas can contain more plant species than mowed areas, providing more potential food sources and habitat for wildlife.



For more advice, go to <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>.



# Principle #6: Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

**Pest management once relied heavily on chemicals. No longer!**

Scientists now recommend **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**. This approach helps prevent and manage pest problems with as few chemicals as possible. IPM emphasizes smart planning, proper maintenance, and natural or low-toxicity controls.

**The way that you plant and maintain your yard either discourages pests or throws out the welcome mat. To prevent pests from scratch, follow these tips:**



- **Think “right plant, right place.”** Plants in unsuitable locations may be stressed and more susceptible to pests.
- **Select plants that are pest-free or pest-resistant.**
- **Use appropriate amounts of water and fertilizer.** Too much of either can cause excessive growth, making plants vulnerable to some insects and diseases.
- **Set aside a time twice each week to walk through your yard and look at plants.** Some small insects complete their life cycles in one week, so a weekly wander through the yard may not be frequent enough.
- **Mow to the proper height and prune selectively.**
- **Encourage beneficial insects in your garden that help manage pests and let them continue their good work!** Welcome the Assassin bug; Green lynx spider; Ladybug; Big-eyed bug; Green lacewing; Parasitic fly; and Parasitic wasps.
- **Common plant pests in Florida include aphids, mealybugs, scales, white flies, thrips, plant-feeding mites, caterpillars, and chinch bugs.** Often you will spot evidence of activity before you see the insect itself — chewed or deformed leaves, sooty mold, many ants scurrying up and down plant stems, or discolored “trails” on leaves.
- **Certain pests are considered “key,” in that they cause the vast majority of landscape problems.** Learn how to recognize such pests as aphids, chinch bugs, white flies and how to treat them with IPM. To see 10 common causes of lawn and garden damage, go to <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/publications/files/fl-friendlyhandbook.pdf>.
- **Tolerate some insect damage and leaf disease on plants.** No one can maintain an insect- and disease-free landscape, and a little damage may not hurt your plants. Remember, in order to have the ‘good guys,’ such as ladybugs, there must be some ‘bad guys,’ or pests, for them to feed on. If a pest problem persists, take a sample of the damaged plant and pest to your county Extension office for suggestions on how to use IPM techniques.



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## Principle #6: Manage Yard Pests Responsibly *(continued)*

### What are suggested IPM techniques?

- **Remove affected leaves or plant parts.** When pests are heavily concentrated on a plant, you can often reduce the problem by simply removing the affected parts.
- **Pick off insects by hand.** Drop into soapy water or isopropyl alcohol, freeze in a bag overnight and put them in your household trash.
- **Look for beneficials.** If you see a pest outbreak, determine if it's being managed by natural enemies already present. Many beneficial insects prey on pests, and harming them will just help the pests.



- **Don't treat minor pest damage.** Remember that there will always be insects in any healthy landscape.
- **Always try the safest alternatives first, such as handpicking insects or pruning affected parts of a plant.** If pesticide use does become necessary, choose products that are the least harmful to people, pets, and wildlife. These products include insecticidal soap, horticultural oil, botanicals (e.g., pyrethrum, neem, and rotenone), microbials (e.g., spinosad, abamectin, and *Bacillus thuringiensis* 'Kurstaki'), and entomopathogenic nematodes (small worms that kill insects).
- **Avoid broad-spectrum insecticides as they also kill beneficials.** Instead, choose targeted products, which are designed to harm only specific pests. For example, products that contain formulations of the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* are used to manage caterpillars without affecting other organisms.
- **Never use blanket applications.** Spot-treat only the affected areas of a plant or lawn.
- **Apply pesticides during the cooler part of the day.** Heat combined with soaps, horticultural oils, and other pesticides can injure plants.
- **Use products only on recommended plants.** Read and follow all label instructions. If you're unsure about applying a product, test it on a small area of the plant first. Check for leaf burn after one to two days.

**For more information visit**  
<http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu>



## Principle #7: Recycle yard waste

**This saves you money and enriches your soil with valuable nutrients.**

- Leave clippings on the lawn—they'll decompose, returning nutrients to the turf.
- After pruning shrubs and small plants, shred the cuttings into your compost pile or toss the cuttings behind a shrub to decompose, if they are not diseased.
- Recycle leaves from deciduous trees. They add wonderful nutrients to soil as they decompose. Leave them under trees to decompose. Grind them up while mowing or rake them into your hedges or compost pile.



### New to Composting?

It's as simple as placing leaves, grass clippings, and small cuttings behind shrubs or in a hidden corner of the yard and letting nature take its course. Bury kitchen waste inside the pile to discourage pests and to prevent odor from rotting fruit. Never place meat, animal fat, or dairy products in a compost pile. Homemade or manufactured compost bins allow you to easily incorporate kitchen waste, such as vegetable and fruit scraps, eggshells, and coffee grounds.

Adding compost improves soil structure, texture, and aeration; retains moisture, loosens compacted soils, promotes soil fertility and stimulates root development, and creates a favorable environment for microorganisms, earthworms, and insects that are nature's soil builders. (And saves you money!) For more advice, go to <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

**Prune shrubs and trees properly. Don't overdo it.**

- **Remove dead, diseased, or injured branches.**
- **Keep it uniform.** Remove branches that cross or touch each other and any that look out of place.
- **Don't use hedge shears.** Cut each branch individually to different lengths.
- **Forget the clipped, formal look.** Soft, flowing, natural lines are attractive and easy to maintain.
- **Keep it minor.** Hire an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture to prune trees taller than about 15 feet. Correct pruning makes trees more resistant to hurricane damage. To find an ISA-certified arborist in your area, check out the International Society of Arboriculture.

**Learn more about tree pruning at**  
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

## Principle #8: Manage Storm-water Runoff

JIC is the tip of an island. The decisions you make in your landscaping directly influence the health of Florida's waters.

Every yard is connected to the Atlantic, the Inlet, and the Indian River. When it rains, exposed soil, grass clippings, leaves, fertilizers and pesticides, road dust, oil, pet waste and other debris become storm-water run off and go directly into our drinking water aquifers and the waters that surround us, damaging aquatic life and harming human health.

The nitrogen and phosphorus in fertilizers and decomposing plant materials fuel the excessive growth of algae, which smothers natural vegetation, depletes oxygen, and kills fish.

A healthy, properly maintained lawn and landscape can absorb and filter storm-water runoff and protect Florida's waters. Follow these guidelines to reduce landscape pollution:



- **Keep it in the ground.** The rain that falls in your yard should soak into your yard. If you have spots where rain rushes to the storm drain, plant a rain garden, an area planted with grasses and other plants to filter water before letting it flow naturally into the ground.
- **Check downspouts.** Aim them at your garden or other porous surface so water can soak into soil. Improve soil drainage around the downspout by periodically aerating it.
- **Choose porous surfaces.** Use bricks, gravel, turf block, mulch, permeable concrete, or other porous materials for walkways, driveways, and patios. These materials allow rainwater to seep into the ground, helping to recharge aquifers.
- **Build swales and berms into your landscape.** Swales and berms capture or slow runoff that would otherwise rush from your yard to the road. Add a maintenance-free zone of native wetland plants to the swale. Always check with Florida Department of Environmental Protection before making any changes to shorelines.
- **Set up a rain barrel or cistern.** When it rains in JIC, it often pours. Rain barrels are a great way to capture some of it, reduce runoff and save on your water bill.

"While our infrastructure project will greatly reduce our storm-water runoff, we urge JIC residents and landscaping providers to follow the Florida-Friendly guidance to reduce it even more," says Mayor Comerford. "We have a responsibility to protect the ocean, inlet, and river waters that make JIC such a paradise."



## Principle #9: Protect the waterfront

Florida boasts 10,000 miles of rivers and streams, 7,800 lakes, 700 freshwater springs, and the second-longest coastline in the United States. As “island dwellers” we have unique challenges and responsibilities.

Throughout JIC, surface water that leaves your lawn as runoff (either due to rain or over-watering) eventually drains into a water body and to the underground aquifer that supplies drinking water.



- **Filter runoff through your lawn:** Make sure that rain soaks into your yard. If you have spots where rain rushes to the storm drain, plant a rain garden, an area planted with grasses and other plants to filter water before letting it flow naturally into the ground. See Principle #8: Manage Storm-water Runoff.
- **Create a buffer.** Waterfront homeowners should establish a 10-foot-wide maintenance-free buffer zone to protect from fertilizer and pesticide runoff. “If there is no buffer zone, add Florida-Friendly, low-maintenance plantings to help reduce pesticide and fertilizer runoff from adjacent lawns and landscaped areas,” suggests Mike Renda, Blowing Rock Nature Conservancy. “Don’t mow, fertilize, or apply pesticides in the maintenance-free zone.” Select plants such as sea grapes that do well without fertilization or irrigation after establishment. Shoreline vegetation attracts native wildlife and reduces erosion. It can also help beautify your property and protect your privacy.
- **Know the codes.** Waterfront property is protected by local or state regulations. A permit may be required for activities as diverse as removing vegetation; extending a fence; building a structure; or developing walking, cycling, or vehicular paths. Before building anything on or clearing anything from your property, make sure you contact the Florida Department of Environmental Protection or your local city or county offices related to land development, building, and planning.
- **Assume stewardship:** “Our waterfronts are precious resources,” says Chip Block, Health, Safety and Beautification Commissioner. “If you live on the waterfront, you have a special responsibility to help protect and sustain it. Some months ago, a potential purchaser of a waterfront property asked, ‘So if I buy, how do I get rid of those things?’ Those *things* happened to be mangroves, plants so essential to Florida’s coastal ecosystem that fines for removing them can be as high as \$1,000,000. When I explained their importance, he decided to buy in a gated community.”





“These nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles — • Right plant, right place • Water efficiently • Fertilize appropriately • Mulch • Attract wildlife • Manage yard pests responsibly • Recycle yard waste • Reduce storm water runoff • Protect the waterfront —are easy to implement.

They can save you money, protect your health and improve the quality of our surrounding waters. In applying them, we can make JIC the Greenest Town in Florida! We look forward to working with all residents to help achieve this important goal.”

**Mayor Dan Comerford**