



# **Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.**

## **ADOPT FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING**

### **Position Statement**

Adopted January 14, 2016

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**Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. is committed to the adoption of Florida-friendly landscape design, construction and maintenance practices to preserve and restore the diversity, productivity and beauty of Florida ecosystems.**

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Florida-friendly landscaping is an adaptive systems approach to the design, construction and maintenance of the landscape based on ecological attributes, such as: (1) biodiversity; (2) soil fertility (consisting of thousands of species of fungi, bacteria, earthworms, insects and protozoa essential to maintaining the balance of water and minerals that allow for plant life); and (3) the food chain or 'circle of life' (plants convert solar energy into starches and proteins; animals eat plants and convert the chemical energy into kinetic energy and heat; animals die and decompose, and their stored energy returns to the soil to be used again by plants.) Florida-friendly landscape practices support the basic conditions essential to maintaining the natural resources, structures and functions of healthy ecosystems. Florida-friendly landscapes can be attractive, functional, low maintenance outdoor living spaces—yards, parks, gardens and public areas—that thrive without compromising the quality of the soil, air and water.

Encompassing organic gardening methods and conservation of resources as well, Florida-friendly landscape practices often mimic natural processes, utilizing what nature provides with as little supplement as can be managed. Florida-friendly landscape practices are interrelated, one influences the other, and any two practices result in benefits to a third or more.

It's easiest to make the shift from conventional to Florida-friendly gardening by making changes incrementally. Take one step at a time. Whether designing a new installation or renovating an existing landscape, incorporate one or more of the following features or practices: nurture soil fertility with organic materials; plant a wide variety of native and naturalized trees and plants specially selected for the growing conditions on the particular site; cluster plants with similar needs together; conserve water by watering plants only when needed, using soaker hoses or drip irrigation, and catching and storing rainwater; reduce stormwater run-off with rain gardens (plantings watered by channeling rainwater from surrounding areas), swales and permeable surfaces; mulch to retain soil moisture and inhibit weeds; regularly pull weeds by hand; use petrochemical pesticides, herbicides and inorganic fertilizers only strategically; use Integrated Pest Management techniques and tolerate some insect damage; compost to recycle yard waste; restrict the introduction and spread of invasive species; emulate wildlife habitat and incorporate feeders, bird baths and other water features; minimize lawns and plant drought-tolerant perennial grasses mixed with wildflowers and bulbs instead; allow areas of the landscape to revert to a natural or semi-natural state; and maintain a buffer zone along waterfronts to prevent the release of hazardous chemicals into canals, rivers, lakes and springs.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. recognizes that we and our communities must coexist within healthy, fully functioning ecosystems. To encourage the adoption of landscaping practices in harmony with the natural conditions of Florida ecosystems we endorse the following:

### **To Promote Florida-friendly Landscaping**

- Promote the adoption of Florida-friendly landscape design, construction and maintenance
- Integrate Florida-friendly landscape principles into federal guidelines, state policies and municipal codes
- Educate federal and state legislators, local governmental agencies, developers, landowners, property managers and landscape professionals, nursery owners and the broader community to the value of Florida-friendly landscaping
- Support the promulgation of Florida-based research results on the effectiveness of Florida-friendly landscape practices

### **To Foster Environmental Stewardship**

- Develop, implement and reliably fund policies, strategies, plans, programs, projects, activities, and priorities addressing the restoration, preservation, and protection of Florida ecosystems
- Promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of Florida ecosystems with outreach programs to educate the broader community
- Engage youngsters in hands-on outdoor learning experiences and age-appropriate volunteer opportunities, such as tree planting events and garden workdays
- Evaluate goals, strategies and methods regularly to incorporate the most recent scientific information and analyses to allow for adaptive Florida-friendly landscaping methods and strategies

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**Charter Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.**

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