

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS	AR NO	DATE APPROVED
SUBJECT: FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM	ORIGINATING AGENCY: Community Services	DEPARTMENT: Community Services
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POLICY:

It is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners to set the proper example for the citizens of Citrus County by implementing procedures that will result in the reduction of nitrate infiltration into ground and surface waters, and to encourage practice changes by employees and citizens through education.

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for managing existing and future turf and landscapes at all Citrus County facilities utilizing the educational guidelines of the University of Florida Extension's Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program, Environmental Landscape Management (ELM) principles and Best Management Practices (BMP).

PROCEDURES:

A. Education

1. All appropriate Maintenance Operations staff will be trained and certified in the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Environmental Landscape Management Course within one year of the approval of this Regulation. New employees will be trained within 90 days of starting a new position. The University of Florida Citrus County Extension Service Urban Horticulture Educator will schedule and conduct all training.
2. Training and certification in the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Environmental Landscape Management Course will be offered to commercial landscape contractors.
3. Division of Extension Services staff will present public education classes.
4. The Extension Office facility will serve as an educational example and demonstration site of building, landscape, and/or design principles related to natural resource conservation including water, energy, and landscapes.
5. Demonstration landscaping areas will be developed at various other County facilities to enhance the public's awareness of landscaping options. Informational signs will be displayed and brochures will be made available for public use.

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B. Facility Design and Maintenance

1. All County facilities will be managed by ELM/Florida Yards and Neighborhoods BMP practices within one year of the approval of this Regulation.
2. Within one year of the approval of this Regulation, all commercial landscapers will be required to have a Citrus County Environmental Landscape Course Certification to be eligible to bid on County projects.
3. All County landscape service contractors will adhere to ELM/BMP practices. All new bid specifications and contracts will reflect this requirement beginning one year after the approval of this regulation.
4. All future new and renovated County facility landscapes will be designed to facilitate BMP principles and planted using Florida friendly landscape materials. Extension Services staff will participate in the plan review of all new facilities.

C. Community Incentives

1. Local businesses and consumers who utilize the recommended ELM practices will be recognized annually through various incentives and public recognition.

ATTACHMENT "A"

WATERING

Class I & II Turf:

- Automatic systems will have a rain cut-off device installed, tested, and maintained.
- All irrigation delivery systems will be calibrated and timed to deliver ¾ to 1 inch of water per irrigation. If no timer is installed, employees must monitor the irrigation cycle manually. Employees must be familiar with both automatic and manual controls.
- During summer months, and at other times when nighttime low temperatures exceed 60° F, the turfgrass will be inspected at least twice weekly for wilt symptoms. When wilt symptoms involve 40% or more of the area, ¾ to 1 inch of irrigation will be applied.
- During the months when nighttime low temperatures are less than 60° F, one inch of water will be applied once a week, excepting when the turf is totally dormant, during which time the interval will be extended to once every 10 days. Any time during the 10-day period when a half-inch or more of rain has fallen will mark the beginning of another 10-day cycle.
- When appropriate according to the label directions, irrigation may be applied after fertilizer or pesticide application, not to exceed 1/3 inch unless more is specifically called for on a pesticide label.
- Automated irrigation will habitually be scheduled to take place between the hours of 12:01 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.
- When possible, manual irrigation will take place during the hours between sunset and sunrise. If irrigation must take place in daylight, it shall be completed by 10:00 a.m.
- Irrigation by small amounts associated with fertilizer and/or pesticide application may occur at any time of the day and should occur as soon after the application as possible.
- Maximum use of low volume irrigation shall be made around landscape trees and shrubs.

FERTILIZING

Class I Turf

- All fertilization will conform to University of Florida BMP.

Class II Turf

- Class II turfgrass will be fertilized twice yearly in the spring and fall. Spring fertilization will take place during the period March 20 - April 10. Fall fertilization will take place during the period September 1 - September 20.
- Fertilizer material will consist of 16-4-8 containing a minimum of 50% water-insoluble Nitrogen (N) or Sulphur-coated Urea, or a combination of the two that comprises at least one half of the total N. Fertilizer will be applied at the rate of one-half pounds of N (three pounds of 16-4-8) per thousand square feet. The fertilizer will be applied over the entire landscape area, and not to the turf alone.
- If a deeper green color is desired during the summer, a spray of an iron sulfate solution may be applied at the discretion of the supervisor.
- Immediately after application, fertilizers will be watered with no more than 1/3 inch of water. Fertilizers will not be applied when heavy rain is expected within 24 hours.

Class III Turf

- As a normal rule, Class III turf will not be fertilized.

DEFINITIONS

Class I Turf – Bermuda grass; Athletic fields

Class II Turf – Irrigated turfgrass areas

Class III Turf – Non-irrigated turfgrass areas

MOWING AND MULCHING

Mowing

- Mowing will always be done with a sharp blade
- Mowing heights will be kept to the minimum heights as follows: St. Augustine grass and Bahia grass – 4 inches; Bermuda grass – 1 ½ inches.
- Mowing of all classes of grass shall be scheduled to take place frequently enough so that no more than one-third of the total leaf blade is removed at any single mowing.
- Clippings will be left on the turf.
- Sharp turns, high speeds, and repetitive mowing patterns shall be avoided.
- Class I turf will be mowed with a reel-type mower, Class II and III turf with a rotary-type mower.

Mulching

- All landscape plants will be mulched to a depth of 2 to 4 inches.
- Mulch rings will extend to at least 3 feet around freestanding trees and shrubs.
- Normally, mulch from the landfill will be used.
- Where appearance is a critical factor, a thin layer of commercial mulch may be spread over the landfill material.
- All mulch will be renewed periodically.
- Mulches will be kept at least 6 inches away from any portion of a building or structure.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

Pest Control: ELM Standards

- Employees will monitor all turf areas and plants at least once a week, and report any pest problems to the appropriate supervisor who shall communicate with the Pest Control Operator (PCO) under contract.
- The contractor (PCO) will monitor all turf areas and plants at least once a month.
- If a pest is detected, the PCO will examine for damage and for the presence of beneficial organisms and determine the probability of the beneficials exerting satisfactory control. If such control by beneficials seems possible, the PCO will recheck in 5 days and determine whether to spray or not based upon the damage threshold having been reached. If the damage threshold is already reached and no beneficials are found, then a control will be applied as soon as possible.
- The PCO will select the least toxic control agent that will be effective.
- The PCO will spot treat insect damage 10 feet around and through the affected areas unless the damage threat is widespread. Disease control agents will be applied as spot-treatment or area treatments depending on the diagnosis and current IFAS recommendations.
- If the pesticide label requires the application of water, the PCO will immediately so advise the appropriate County employee who is responsible for applying irrigation water.
- Frequent coordination and communication between the PCO and the employee having supervisory authority over the landscape areas are essential to the successful implementation of this program, and will be required as a condition of compliance.

PRUNING TREES AND SHRUBS

General

- In general, no more than 30% of a plant will be removed at any one time when pruning occurs.
- The practice of pruning shade trees that is called topping, heading back or buckhorning will not be employed.
- The practice of shearing shrubs will not be employed.
- Management of a shrub's size will be accomplished by the practice known as selective thinning.
- Pruning paint will only be used when cosmetics are important.
- Times for pruning vary for different landscape plants. If in doubt, the supervisor will consult with the Extension Office to determine the best time to prune the various trees and shrubs.
- All tools must be kept sharp and in good repair.
- Whenever possible, trimmings and organic debris will be recycled through the County landfill.