



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN TOPIC: Transforming Florida Yard is Helped by FYN Website

Question: We have looked at your website and really think it is great. We are trying to re-landscape the entire yard but really don't know where to get started. Can you help? Bob, Fort Myers

Answer: An important first step is to assess what you have in the yard right now. Is there a working sprinkler system? What landscape plants are planted too close to the house? A critical first step missed by many new homeowners is determining what invasive exotic plants (trees, shrubs and groundcovers) are best removed before installing Florida-Friendly landscaping. If not sure what plants you have, bring a sample to the Extension Office for identification. Once you know what should be removed first, then go to local garden centers and ask about suitable replacement plants.

Transforming your yard is a process so start small. Choose one section of your yard to begin planting. Side or back borders and lawn areas along waterways often get chosen first to redo. For any plantings along the water, a 10-foot maintenance-free buffer zone using trees, shrubs and groundcovers can work in place of turfgrass. First decide what trees and shrubs you like that would not impede your view of the water. Choose plants suggested to thrive with less fertilizer, pruning and irrigation. Use the Plant Selection Tool for plant ideas at <http://www.floridayards.org/>. The website quickly gives you plant alternatives for the yard conditions you have.

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>.

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