

SPRING IS IN THE AIR



It's that time of year again to spring clean your yard. Preparing your yard for a new growing season can be overwhelming. Perhaps you should try tackling just one specific area around your house instead of "eating the whole elephant".

Consider taking out some of your water guzzling plants and landscape with Florida native plants, which are drought tolerant. Group your plants according to their water needs and soil conditions, thus cutting back on supplemental irrigation.

Use mulch to retain the moisture around your plants. Spread two to four inches on the plant beds keeping the mulch several inches away from the plant stems. This helps keep the plant stem from rotting.

Change your irrigation method to drip method or micro spray in the designated area. Inspect your irrigation system regularly to make sure your pipes, fittings, hoses and heads are working correctly.

Florida law requires an automatic rain sensor shut-off device. If you don't have one, you should get one or check to make sure the one you have is working properly.

Irrigate only when your plants or grass show signs of stress. Over watering is often the cause of many common problems such as dollar weed and fungal growth.

When needed, the best choice of fertilizer for your plants is the slow release type. Fertilizers carried by irrigation water or rain can enter our groundwater and our waterways. There are other methods of putting nutrients into your soil such as composting.

Plant a rain garden. After the past two years of historic rainfall we all know where the low spots are in our lawns. Plants that can tolerate excess water will thrive.

If you follow some of these simple tips, your yard chores can be less and so can your water bill.

Do you know how to read your meter?

Your meter is located in the ground inside a rectangular box with a metal, plastic or concrete lid. First look for a small red triangle at the center of the meter. If this triangle is moving (or if there is no triangle but the sweep hand is moving), then there is water being used in the house.

Your water meter reads like a car's odometer, but with a permanent zero in the gallon place. Single gallons are counted by the sweep hand. A complete revolution of this hand is 10 gallons.

Volusia County only bills in 1,000 gallons. So, if for example you only used 950 gallons in a month, then you would only be billed for availability. But, the following month, assuming you used the same amount of water, you would be billed for 1,000 gallons.

Water meters do not speed up. If anything, they slow down so we check them periodically for accuracy.

In the case of the meter pictured below, the meter is showing 2,465,310 7. Lets assume the read last month was 2,450,310 7. This picture tells us that the customer used 15,000 gallons. The numbers you see in black are not used in the calculation.



New aerial photography and topographic information for Volusia County

Volusia County Stormwater Utility has contracted with Woolpert, Inc. to collect and process six-inch pixel color digital orthophotography and LiDAR data. The need for this quality of information was made very apparent over the last two years of flooding on the west side of the county, along with the rapid growth we are experiencing. The flights for this collection will take place in February.

Light Detection And Ranging (LiDAR) simply is measuring the time it takes to bounce a laser off the earth's surface. It uses Global Positioning System (GPS), inertial navigation equipment, and ground survey control. The LiDAR points collected can accurately detect the contour of the earth's surface. The LiDAR point density will be an average of every 3.3 feet. After the data is collected, a computer process will strip the vegetation, buildings, cars, etc. off the data and create a Digital Elevation Model (DEM). This DEM will be used to lay the aerial photography over for accurate placement. Additionally, it will be sent to FEMA for revising the flood insurance rate maps.

This revision of the flood maps may take a couple of years to complete. Revision of the flood maps provides us with more points in

the Community Rating System that will increase the flood insurance discount for property owners. Further processing with breaklines to create a digital terrain model will allow us to map areas that flooded in 2005 for current and future development issues.

The DTM will allow us to study and respond better to flood events with much more detailed information. Current contour information is from United States Geological Survey quad sheets with five foot contour lines. Our new points will have an accuracy of .6 feet and create contour lines of one foot. The color digital aerial photography will assist with the processing of the LiDAR data as well as provide an accurate background for mapping and asset management. Color infrared, black and white photography may be processed from this collection as well. There has never been countywide aerial photography of this quality collected before. We are planning to have all this digital information, LiDAR and photography, available on DVDs at all the public libraries for check out.

Most of this project is funded over the next two years by the Stormwater Utility.

Volusia County Utilities continues to offer a \$50 rebate for customers who replace their old toilet (over 10 years old) with a new 1.6-gallons per flush toilet. Please, one rebate per household. Contact Becky Adkins at 386-943-7027 ext 2611 for details.

Waterwise plant of the month

Passion flower or Maypop

Passiflora incarnata



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DeLeon Springs stormwater project

Stormwater Utility has partnered with the Road and Bridge Division and Community Services Department for a road paving and stormwater improvement project in DeLeon Springs. The project consists of the construction of a stormwater retention pond, roadside swales and paving of dirt roads. The roads to be paved including swales are Park, Cordova, Quebec, Audobon and Alcazar Avenues, Seminole Drive and Baxter Street.

The stormwater component of the project will result in flood reduction and treatment of stormwater pollution. Paving of the dirt roads will eliminate the severe erosion and sediment accumulation after storm events. In addition, the high cost of road grading maintenance will be eliminated.

Stormwater Utility is providing engineering support. Construction will be by Road and Bridge. Community Development Block Grant Funding (CDBG) is being administered by Community Services.

The project is under construction, and is expected to be completed in March.



There are more than 400 species that fall under the category *Passiflora*. Most are evergreen/tropical vines and commonly are called passion flowers. This particular one is deciduous, can survive our winter freezes, and makes a full recovery in spring. It also is referred to as Maypop and the Passion flower.

Fast growing and sturdy, they need fences or sturdy trellises to support them. The vines tend to grow haphazardly so they look best in natural and informal plantings.

Like all passion flowers, they have beautifully complex blossoms. They enjoy full to part sun and often can be seen growing on the edges of fields, along side ditches and other sunny moist and fertile places. It's the fruit of this species that are called maypops. The size of small hen's eggs, they are green skinned and seedy. The fruit should be left to fall from the trees to insure their ripeness and therefore usually are consumed by hungry creatures. It is the fruit of a related species (*P.edulis*) that gives Hawaiian Punch its distinctive taste.

Read the fine print

We all wish we had more time, and in our haste, all of us have at sometime have forgotten to read the fine print on items of importance. Always check the water bill's fine print. If you see a CR before your balance due (upper right hand corner of your bill) it means you have a credit balance and a payment is not needed.

You might ask

Q: How does nature recycle water?

A: *The water cycle keeps the amount of total water on the globe constant. Water from oceans, lakes, rivers, ponds, puddles and other water surfaces evaporates to become clouds. The clouds make rain, snow or sleet that falls to earth to make rivers and streams, some of which seeps into the ground to form groundwater. All of this water flows to the ocean to start the cycle over again. Before returning to the ocean, some of this water is taken for drinking water and then discharged as wastewater. The cycle is never-ending.*