



# Waterline News

Presented by Volusia County Water  
Resources and Utilities  
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## Native plants

Our Florida native plants may not be as neat in form as cultivated plants on the market. Cultivated plants have been bred to be very uniform in appearance. But native plants provide seeds and fruits for birds native to this area. They also blend harmoniously with the existing natural vegetation and are tolerant to our climate conditions. The Florida Native Plant Society is dedicated to furthering knowledge of native plants. Check out [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org) to get information on local chapters and on businesses that sell our native plants. Don't hesitate to speak to local nurseries about carrying native plants. More native plants will be available as people ask for them.

## Waterwise landscape ordinance

On an average, Florida receives about 54 inches of rain each year. Of that, 39 inches evaporate and another eight inches run off to streams, rivers, lakes and the ocean. This leaves only seven inches to percolate back to our aquifer. Next to air, water is the most important element for the preservation of life. Water is a finite commodity that, if not managed properly, will result in shortages in the near future. Water conservation can go a long way to help alleviate impending shortages.

The Florida Legislature passed a bill last spring requiring the state's five water management districts to develop landscape irrigation standards and guidelines. With that in mind, Volusia County's Environmental Management Division implemented the Waterwise Landscape ordinance. The ordinance, approved by Volusia County Council became effective July 1, 2004. Volusia County now has the most stringent limitations in Central Florida.

The ordinance provides developers and builders a blueprint for landscaping. New lawns must have up to 50 percent of waterwise plants instead of water thirsty grass. It does not restrict the amount of grass, only how much can receive high-volume irrigation; up to an inch a week. So, those homeowners who like St. Augustine grass, can cover their lawns with it, but under the new rules, would only be able to water half of the lawn.

Visit Environmental Control's website at:

[http://volusia.org/environmental/natural\\_resources/water](http://volusia.org/environmental/natural_resources/water)

[resources/landscapeordinance.htm](http://volusia.org/environmental/natural_resources/water/resources/landscapeordinance.htm) to get more information on the Landscape ordinance.

## Waterwise plant of the month

### Live oak tree (*Quercus Virginiana*)

This native tree is a member of the evergreen family. Its growth is slow to moderate to become a massive specimen that can reach heights of 30-50 feet and 50-80 feet wide. The tree produces small acorns that become a good food source for birds and squirrels. The flowers, typical of oaks, are catkins that hang 2-3 inches. They appear in very early spring and dust our homes and cars with yellow pollen. Live oaks often are seen decorated with Spanish moss. The Live oak is considered the ultimate southern shade tree that tolerates auto pollution, likes partial shade to full sun and prefers moist, well-drained soil. Once established it is drought tolerant.



*Quercus virginiana*

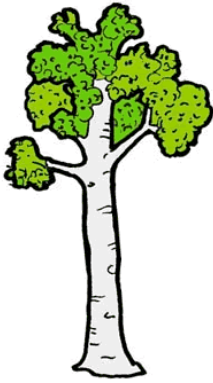
**We are regularly asked: "How could I have used this much water?" The following web sites offer an opportunity to see how you use your water by providing water consumption calculators.**

<http://provwater.com>

<http://environment.about.com/library/weekly/blwatercalculator.htm>

<http://csgnetwork.com/waterusagecalc.html>

# Kids korner



## MICRO-IRRIGATION

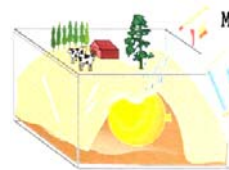
Micro-irrigation also is known as low-volume irrigation and is the water-conserving way to irrigate. While not appropriate to irrigate lawns, micro-irrigation is a cost effective way to irrigate waterwise trees, shrubs and ground-covers until they are established. Since the water in micro-irrigation is released

at or near the soil level, there is reduced loss to evaporation over conventional in-ground automatic sprinkler systems. Also, micro-irrigation systems distribute less than 1/3 gallon per minute, compared to up to two gallons per minute with the conventional system. Because of lesser output and less evaporation, micro-irrigation is exempt from watering restrictions. **But...**water-conserving homeowners still must be aware of water used with these systems! Drip systems, bubbler systems and micro-spray jet systems are different types of microirrigation. In our sandy soils, only a limited region of soil will stay saturated after micro-irrigation, a much more limited area than in clay soils. Many commercial landscapers are using drip lines with efficient pressure-compensating emitters plus careful design to help the customer save water. Do some research and check with local irrigation contractors if you plan on irrigation changes to your yard this year.

We have all heard so much in the news lately about sinkholes here in Volusia County, so I thought you might be interested in knowing how one is formed.

**Make Your Own Sinkhole** — a sinkhole is a collapsed underground space caused when bedrock erodes and dissolves from acidic water.

Here is an easy experiment that you can do at home.



Materials • shoebox or other container

- small balloon
- sand or dirt
- spray bottle of water
- straight pin
- miniature homes, trees, farm animals, etc.

### Directions

1. Fill the bottom of the container with a few inches of dirt or sand.
2. Blow up the balloon and lay it on the surface.
3. Completely cover the balloon with damp dirt or sand.
4. Place miniature pieces on surface.
5. Dampen the surface by spraying water on it.
6. Pop the balloon and observe the results. (If the model doesn't collapse, continue spraying water on the surface.)

## Irrigation audits available for you

If you use county water or reclaimed water for irrigation, take advantage of a visit by a trained irrigation auditor. In this one-hour visit, the auditor will do minor adjustments, assess your system, and work with you on timer settings. The cost to you is just \$25. The Water Authority of Volusia, through a grant from Volusia County Environmental Management, is paying the remaining balance. Call (386) 322-5160 #33 to be put on the list and for auditor referral. First come first-served! Save water and money on your water bill by running your irrigation system more efficiently.

## Mowing your lawn



Cut your grass at the highest recommended height for your turf species or the highest setting on your lawn mower. Cut no more than third of the grass length to encourage grass roots to grow deeper and grass blades to hold moisture. Keep mower blades sharp for a clean cut dull blades tear grass, opening it to disease. Leave short grass clippings where they fall. The clippings reduce the lawn's need for water and fertilizer. Remove thick patches of clippings so that the clippings will not kill the grass underneath.

## Mulch

Mulches help stabilize the soil temperature, prevent evaporation, and discourage weed growth. They also can provide interesting textural variation and add visual variety to a garden. Mulches can be organic like bark and wood chips or inorganic like gravel and rock.

[www.volusia.org/environmental](http://www.volusia.org/environmental)

## To Conserve Volusia's Precious Water Resources

Watering Days Even Addresses: Thur. and Sun.  
Odd Addresses: Wed. and Sat.

Automatic Sprinkler Systems 4-8AM only  
Manual Sprinkler Systems  
4-8AM and 4-8PM (5-9pm Daylight Savings Time)

Applies to private wells, lakes & ponds, and city water.

For updates on watering restrictions, call (386) 736-5998 in West Volusia  
(386) 423-3359 in New Smyrna Beach and (386) 239-7890 in Daytona Beach.

