

Shrubs and annuals

It's not that complicated: to cut down on the need for irrigation in your landscape, use plants that don't need much water. By using plants that thrive naturally in our subtropical climate, your landscape will be able to withstand water restrictions like the ones in place.

Another bonus is that many of the Florida-friendly plants attract butterflies and birds. Candlestick Cassia attracts all the butterflies in the sulphur family; zebra long wings flock to Jatropha all year long. Beautyberry and Golden Dewdrop provide berries for birds for much of the year.

For those areas where you have roses, bananas and other water-hungry plants, you obviously can't just rip them up and start from scratch. However, you can lay down a three-inch layer of pine straw or mulch to keep the soil moist.

No matter what plants you have, it's always best to water deeply and infrequently...preferably before the sun comes up. Besides the fact that watering daily is now prohibited, it's not beneficial to plants that are already established. Shallow watering encourages shallow root growth; watering $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep once a week is much better because it forces plants to send roots further into the ground to search for moisture. You can still install new plants and water them between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. every morning except Friday during a 30-day establishment period.

For both existing and new plants, consider hoses with perforated holes that allow water to seep out; placing them under the mulch cuts evaporation down even further. Other drip systems can be installed six inches underground or under mulch.

"Drought-tolerant plants not only survive drought conditions better, but even under normal circumstances, you'll spend less time and money maintaining and watering your yard," said Bruce Adams, water conservation officer at the South Florida Water Management District.

You might consider these drought-tolerant shrubs because they do not need watering more than once a week (and may not need any except in extended dry periods) once established: Plumbago, Jatropha, Jamaican Caper, Desert Rose, Century Plant, Shell Ginger, Bougainvillea, Butterfly Bush, Natal Plum, Cocoplum, Pigeon Plum, Dracaena, Golden Dewdrop, Crown-of-Thorns, Aloes, Firebush, Rosemary, Dwarf Schefflera, Saw Palmetto, White Bird-of-Paradise, Gaillardia, Croton, Juniper, Allamanda, Viburnum, Cassia, Cape and Confederate Jasmine, Ornamental Grasses

Drought-Tolerant Annuals & Perennials : Verbena, Salvia, Dusty Miller, Walking Iris, Kalanchoe, Shrimp Plant, Society Garlic, Scaevola, Ground Orchids, Begonias, Bromeliads, Petunias, Pentas, Crinum Lily, Angel Trumpet, Cycads

If you have questions about Water Smart techniques, call the South Florida Water Management District at 800-662-8876 or the Palm Beach County Extension Master Gardener Hotline at 561-233-1750.