

## Charter Point Community Association

### Guidelines: Florida Friendly vs. Eco-Friendly

**Florida-Friendly Landscaping (FFL)** is the practice of using low-maintenance plants and environmentally sustainable practices.

**Eco-friendly (ECO)** literally means earth-friendly or not harmful to the environment

Homeowners may elect to install a FFL yard, as defined in F.S. 373.185 (initiative as a means to reduce water consumption and prevent further pollution of the environment with pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers).

#### ***Basic Requirements:***

**FFL landscape principles** require the right plant in the right place for the site conditions; proper soil composition, soil pH; plans for drainage, light, temperature; specific pest control; and taking care to avoid residual chemicals in the soil. Florida Friendly landscaping *does not mean overgrown vegetation*. Homeowners shall be required to trim back overgrowth.

**Typically, ECO landscapes** do not have a manicured look. Overgrown, uncultivated yards do not represent eco-friendly, by Charter Point standards, and are unacceptable in Charter Point.

- FFL or ECO both require submitting a landscape plan detailing plants, landscape design and upkeep.
- ECO choices must be appropriate to the climate (regional native species), local zoning ordinances and Association standards.
- ECO soil quality and acidity, moisture content and whether plantings will be in full sun or shade, or both must also be considered

**CPCA Landscaping Upkeep Standards (at minimum):** Beds must be weeded, edged and mulched as needed; bushes and trees must be kept trimmed; fallen trees, limbs, bushes and debris must be promptly removed from yards. Driveways, streets and sidewalks must be edged and cleared of debris.

#### **Basic FFL & ECO Landscape Aesthetic**

Landscaping: the process of making a yard more attractive by altering the existing design, adding ornamental features, and planting trees and shrubs.

Most landscape designs are permissible in Charter Point, as long as the design does not violate COJ code or CPCA landscape standards, or pose a health or safety risk to nearby properties or the neighborhood. COJ code has the right to force a homeowner to cut back overgrown landscaping if it impedes roadways, right-of-ways or sidewalks.

FF HOA Law does not eliminate the ability of CPCA to create and enforce aesthetic standards related to landscaping, so long as our standards do not violate the accepted practices, procedures and materials outlined in FF HOA law and mirrored in the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program.

The FFL Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection and Landscape Design provided by the University of Florida, IFAS Extension can be used as a guideline for FFL and ECO sod replacements.

All Major Landscape Improvement or Alteration applications seeking to replace sod with FFL or ECO plantings, said replacement shall constitute live "groundcover" providing full ground coverage to maintain a "lawn appearance" in keeping with the aesthetics of the community.

### **Basic FFL & ECO Upkeep**

Each homeowner with an FFL or ECO yard will conduct routine maintenance including fertilizer use, if needed, and mowing/trimming in accordance with the most current version of the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Guide to Florida-Friendly Landscaping.

If a FFL lawn maintenance contract is employed, all FFL lawn maintenance contracts will follow the University of Florida Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences and Florida Department of Environmental Protection Green Industries Best Management Practices manual, and if needed, irrigation, fertilizer and pesticide applications must be at the low end of the maintenance recommendations contained in the most recent copy of the manual.

All contractors maintaining a FFL property must employ Green Industries Best Management Practices certified supervisors and applicators of fertilizer or pesticides. At least one certified person must be on site when work is being performed.

### **Submitting an Application for a FFL Landscape Plan**

The CPCA also has the right to require a homeowner submit a Exterior Alteration - Major Landscape Improvement/Alteration application to the CPCA Architectural Review committee and receive approval before commencing a major landscape plan. Technically, the CPCA cannot deny a FFL application unless it does not comply to FFL principles.

As necessary, the CPCA Architectural Review committee or Board will call upon a neutral, certified professional knowledgeable in horticultural and FFL/ECO principles to assist in reviewing FFL and ECO applications to determine what is and what does not comport with FFL or ECO.

### **Definitions**

"Certified Professional" means a person who possesses a certificate of completion in the Florida Green Industries Best Management Practices (FGI-BMP). UF Extension Services has lists by county of FGI-BMP certified master landscapers.

"Ground cover" plantings are those that grow low to the ground providing a permanent covering. Ground cover shall be fast growing, appropriate to the region and have a mature height of ten inches (10") or less. Full ground coverage is providing a "lawn appearance" with a mature spread achieved within six (6) months.

UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program (2018). *Florida-Friendly Landscape Guidance Models for Ordinances, Covenants, and Restrictions*. Retrieved from <https://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2017 Florida Statutes, 373.185 *Local Florida-friendly Landscaping Ordinances*. Retrieved from <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes>.



According to the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook, Florida-friendly landscaping means “quality landscapes that conserve water, protect the environment, are adaptable to local conditions, and are drought tolerant.”

Formerly referred to as Xeriscaping, Florida Friendly Landscaping has nine guiding principles designed to help protect natural resources and preserve Florida’s unique beauty:

*Right Plant, Right Place:* Plants selected to suit a specific site will require minimal amounts of water, fertilizers and pesticides;

*Water Efficiently:* Irrigate only when your lawn needs water. Efficient watering is the key to a healthy yard and conservation of limited resources;

*Fertilize Appropriately:* Less is often best. Over-use of fertilizers can be hazardous to your yard and the environment;

*Mulch:* Maintain two to three inches of mulch in flower and landscape beds to help retain soil moisture, prevent erosion and suppress weeds;

*Attract Wildlife:* Plants in your yard that provide food, water and shelter can conserve Florida's diverse, non-threatening wildlife;

*Manage Yard Pests Responsibly:* Unwise use of pesticides can harm people, pets, beneficial organisms and the environment;

*Recycle:* Grass clippings, leaves and yard trimmings recycled on site provide nutrients to the soil and reduce waste disposal;

*Reduce Storm Water Runoff:* Water running off your yard can carry pollutants, such as fertilizer, pesticides, soil and debris that can harm water quality. Reduction of this runoff will help prevent pollution;

*Protect the Waterfront:* Waterfront property, whether on a river, stream, pond, bay or beach, is very fragile and should be carefully protected to maintain freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Before converting to a Florida-Friendly Landscape, the CPCA requires the submission of a Florida-Friendly Master Landscape Plan. This is a complete plan for your yard that includes all elements in precise locations, taking into account the nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles. To create the Master Plan, conduct a site inventory and soil analysis to determine the opportunities and constraints of your yard. Pay attention to soil type, existing vegetation, shade patterns, drainage patterns, views, and utility locations. Homeowners should also consider their needs and wants and all CPCA requirements/standards.

Florida Friendly Landscaping Program, (2018). *The Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook*. Retrieved from [www.floridayards.org](http://www.floridayards.org).

UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program (2018). *The Florida Friendly Landscaping™ Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design (2015)*. Retrieved from <https://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>.