

# PALM PRINTS

The quarterly newsletter of the Florida Friendly Landscaping program for community associations

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April-June 2009

## Managing Your Landscape during Drought

During a drought, the regional water management districts in Florida have the authority to restrict water use. Recently the Southwest Florida Water Management District issued a Modified Phase III Water Shortage Declaration for Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and DeSoto counties. For information on the water restrictions, as of March 2009, in the unincorporated areas of Sarasota County see insert, or visit <http://www.co.sarasota.fl.us>. Residents are encouraged to restrict the installation of new lawns and plantings.

Increasingly, Florida is at greater risk of water shortages due to increased urbanization, population growth, and limited water supply. With these limitations on water use, you must decide how best to maintain your landscape with the limited water available.

Drought occurs in every part of Florida at one time or another, so you need to know how to conserve water while also maintaining your landscape. Plants require different amounts of water to survive, but there are some general guidelines to follow for maintaining your landscape during drought. The following tips will help you maintain your landscape during drought conditions *and* conserve water.

### **Prioritize Your**

#### **Landscape Water Needs:**

Water your highly visible and most intensively managed areas first. You may consider watering drought-sensitive plants first. If you must choose between watering landscape plants (including trees and

shrubs) and watering your lawn then water your plants, trees and shrubs. Replacing lawn grass is usually less expensive than replacing trees and shrubs.

**Irrigation Practices:** Water early in the morning when less water is lost to evaporation and wind drift, and water deeply and less frequently rather than frequent, shallow watering. During the cooler months in fall and winter, your lawn doesn't need watering every week. Deep watering improves drought resistance in established plants by promoting deeper and more extensive root systems. A shallow root system is often caused by too much irrigation and may cause weed and fungus problems. Calibrate the irrigation system so it applies  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch per watering event.

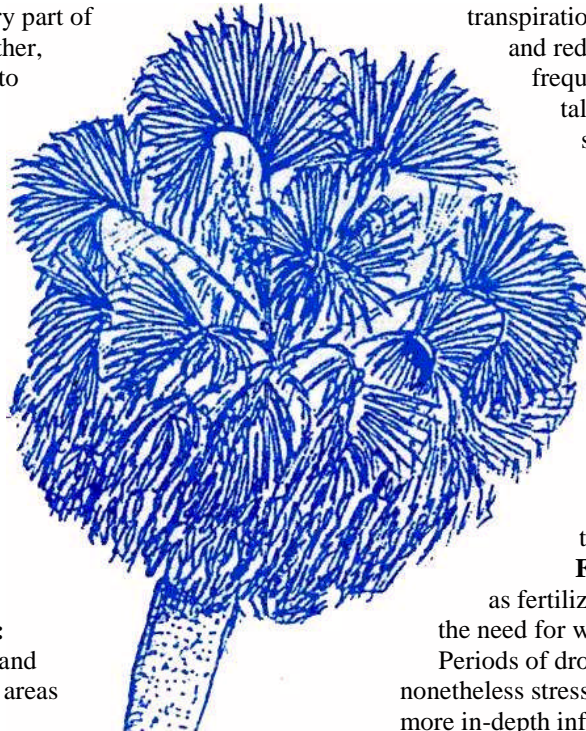
**Mowing:** Mowing stresses grass by increasing transpiration (water loss from leaves to atmosphere) and reducing root growth; therefore, mow less frequently. Maintaining your lawn grass at a taller height will help develop deeper root systems, which in turn make the grass more tolerant of drought. Lawn mower blades should be sharp as sharp blades make cleaner cuts, and cleaner cuts cause less plant stress and less water loss from grass.

**Control Weeds:** Weeds use water that would otherwise be available for desirable plants.

**Mulch:** Use 2 to 3 inches of mulch on entire beds of shrubs, trees, annuals and perennials. Mulch reduces evaporation from soil and moderates soil temperature, reducing root stress.

**Fertilizing:** Don't fertilize during drought as fertilizer promotes plant growth, which increases the need for water.

Periods of drought are natural in Florida but are nonetheless stressful for plants, animals, and people. For more in-depth information about caring for your landscape during drought, visit <http://solutionsforyourlife.ifas.ufl.edu> and select **EDIS: UF/IFAS Publications** (enter "drought"), or contact your local Extension office at <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu> or 861-9900.





## *Prunus angustifolia* CHICKASAW PLUM

shaded area represents potential  
planting range

For those of you who miss the flowering plums of the northern states, Chickasaw Plum can fill that void. Chickasaw Plum is usually seen with a multiple trunk planted as a specimen or in a median strip, or planted on 15 to 20 foot centers along the entrance road to a commercial property. Occasionally it is grown with a single leader and used as a street tree. In its native habitat, it is most commonly seen on old fields and other disturbed fields. It can grow up to 25 feet tall and is usually just as wide and forms a rounded mass of slender, thorny branches sprouting from a short trunk. Chickasaw Plum can make a nice addition to the shrub border in the back yard and is well suited for planting around the patio or a deck. It does not form a nice crown but occasional pruning can significantly improve the form of the crown. Chickasaw Plum is very easily grown and has no special cultural requirements. It tolerates drought, sandy or clay soil and even grows in coastal areas. The showy, white, fragrant flowers appear in late winter / early spring before the one to two-inch-long leaves appear. The flowers make the trees look quite decorative in the presence of evergreen, or other dormant trees. The round, reddish-yellow, ½ inch plums ripen by early summer. The fruits are used by a variety of song birds and also make a delicious jelly. The dense foliage provides ample opportunity for nesting.

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

**Scientific name:** *Prunus angustifolia*

**Pronunciation:** PROO-nus an-gus-tih-FOLE-ee-uh

**Common name(s):** Chickasaw Plum

**Family:** Rosaceae

**Origin:** native to North America

For more information on this and other trees, also visit this website: <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees>, where fact sheets of more than 600 trees can be found.

## What is Blooming?



golden dewdrop

Spring is full of delightful surprises. Wildflowers are awakening from winter dormancy and unloading new growth and cheery blossoms. One tiny flower, the blue-eyed grass, is a delicate periwinkle blue up close, but from afar is a panoramic field of color. Another wildflower, gaillardia, is a faithful perennial, which always produces an abundance of new

seedlings each spring.

Their yellows, reds and orange colors will enliven any greenery.

Wildflowers can be grown with other flowers and shrubs in your landscape beds or in a meadow-like setting.

### Flowers in bloom now:

African iris, blue-eyed grass, bromeliads, bush daisy, cannas (all varieties), cross vine, cupid's shaving brush, gaillardia, horsemint, jewels of Opar, pentas, pineland heliotrope, purple heart, sages (all varieties), scorpion-tail, spiderwort, Tampa verbena, walking iris, water lilies and wild petunia.

### Shrubs in bloom now:

Beach sunflower, bougainvillea, cassias (all varieties), dwarf Indian hawthorne, false roselle, firebush, firecracker plant, ixora (Nora Grant),

lantanas (all varieties), loropetalum,

Mexican sunflower, Natal plum, orange plume, passionvines (all varieties), plumbago (all varieties), porterweeds (all varieties), rose (Louis Philippe), Sandankwa viburnum, sweet viburnum, Texas sage, tibouchina, vitex, and Walter's viburnum.

### Trees in bloom now:

Avocado, Chickasaw plum, citrus (grapefruit, oranges), jatrophia, lychee, mango, necklace pod, purple tabebuia, and white cordia.

### Plants with fruit or berries:

Bananas, cardboard plant, citrus (all varieties), coonties, golden dewdrop, magnolia (Little Gem), marlberry, necklace pod, papaya, rouge plant, wax myrtle, weeping yaupon holly, and wild coffee.

## CALENDAR

To register by phone, please call 861-9900. For more classes and class descriptions, please visit our website at <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>: click on Education Calendar on top of the page.

<b>April 1: 1:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Bed Bugs: A growing Menace</i> – Fred Santana	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>April 2: 10:00am – Thurs</b> <i>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles</i> – MG Yard Advisors	<b>Venice Library</b>
<b>April 2: 2:00pm – Thurs</b> <i>Our Native Airplants</i> – Annemarie Post	<b>Shamrock Park</b>
<b>April 3: 1:30pm - Fri</b> <i>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles</i> – MG Yard Advisors	<b>Gulf Gate Library</b>
<b>April 3: 2:00pm – Fri</b> <i>Sustainability Theater</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Selby Library</b>
<b>April 4: 1:00pm – Sat</b> <i>“First Saturdays” Class on Organic Vegetable Gardening</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Orange Blossom Community Garden</b>
<b>April 8: 4:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Backyard landscapes for Native Pollinators</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>April 9: 10:00am – Thurs</b> <i>Compost and Rain barrel Field Day</i> – Larry Rabinowitz	<b>Newtown Estates Park</b>
<b>April 13: 2:00pm – Mon</b> <i>Container Gardening</i> – Master Gardener	<b>Selby Library and North Port Library</b>
<b>April 15: 10:00am – Wed</b> <i>Managing in Tough Times</i> – Carolyn Gregov	<b>North Port Library</b>
<b>April 15: 10am – Wed</b> <i>Butterfly Gardening</i> – Patricia Porchey	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>April 15: 1:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Butterfly Predators</i> – Fred Santana	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>April 15: 4:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Are You Fire Wise?</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>April 16: 10:00am – Thurs</b> <i>Stretching Your Food Dollar</i> – Carolyn Gregov	<b>Jacaranda Library</b>
<b>April 16: 2:00pm – Thurs</b> <i>Managing in Tough Times</i> – Carolyn Gregov	<b>Fruitville library</b>
<b>April 16: 2:00pm – Thurs</b> <i>Stretching Your Food Dollar</i> – Maria Portelos-Rometo	<b>Venice Library</b>
<b>April 16: 2:00pm – Thurs</b> <i>Chinch Bugs and White Grubs</i> – Fred Santana	<b>Shamrock Park</b>
<b>April 17: 10:30am – Fri</b> <i>Stretching Your Food Dollar</i> – Maria Portelos-Rometo	<b>Selby Library</b>
<b>April 18: 10:30am – Sat</b> <i>“Third Saturdays” Class on Organic Vegetable Gardening</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Laurel Community Garden</b>
<b>April 20: 2:00pm – Mon</b> <i>Florida Yards &amp; Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard</i> – MG Yard Advisors	<b>Fruitville Library</b>
<b>April 22: 1:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Insect Biodiversity in the Garden</i> – Fred Santana	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>April 29: 1:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Termites: What to Know and Do About Them</i> – Fred Santana	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>May 1: 10:00am – Fri</b> <i>Storm Protection: Hurricane Shutters</i> – Betty Alpaugh	<b>Jacaranda Library</b>
<b>May 1: 1:30pm – Fri</b> <i>Sustainability Theater</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Gulf Gate Library</b>
<b>May 2: 2:00pm – Sat</b> <i>“First Saturdays” Class on Organic Vegetable Gardening</i> – Robert Kluson	<b>Orange Blossom Community Garden</b>
<b>May 6: 10:00am – Wed</b> <i>The Green Office</i> – Betty Alpaugh	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>
<b>May 6: 1:00pm – Wed</b> <i>Invasive Insect Pests</i> – Fred Santana	<b>Twin Lakes Park</b>

## Grant Information

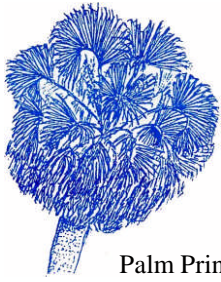
The next **Sarasota County Neighborhood Grant** cycle will start later this year. The Grant Goals are: Enhance Safety (signs for neighborhood watch programs, etc.), Preserve Character and Value (landscaping public rights-of-way or medians, entrances, and removal of non-native invasive plants), Build Neighborhood Leadership (cost associated with organizational and educational events, etc.), and Enhance Health (trails, bike paths, improvements to the environment, etc.). The Grant will only fund landscaping projects that conform to Florida-friendly Landscaping principles. For more information about this program, contact Vicki French at 861-5145 or [vfrench@scgov.net](mailto:vfrench@scgov.net). For more information about the Florida-friendly Landscaping Program, please visit our website (<http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu>). Also see the website of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org), for grant opportunities.

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Florida Friendly Landscaping for Community Associations  
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# Compost & Rain Barrel Field Day

Composting and rain barrel workshops, and gardening demonstrations  
(earthworms, earth boxes, and more)

Prizes!

(An earth box and several rain barrels will be raffled)

Thursday, April 9: 10 AM-12 noon

at

Newtown Estates Park

Newtown Blvd. at Dr. M.L. King Jr. Way

(Across the street from the North Sarasota Library)

Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Institution