It is unrealistic, and even unwise, to strive for an insect-, disease- and weed-free yard. Many insects are beneficial, helping to keep pests under natural control. Many other insects simply coexist with humans causing us no harm.

Meet some of the “Good Guys.” Help protect these beneficial insects — so they can naturally keep pests under control.
IPM-Integrated Pest Management

Communities and individuals are successfully managing pests by protecting beneficials and reducing the use of pesticides. By definition, pests include insects, diseases (such as viruses) and weeds. It is easy to practice IPM in your yard.

1st Check your lawn and plant beds regularly for pest problems.

2nd Identify the problem. Know the good from the bad. Is it a chinch bug or a big-eyed bug? It makes a difference. Big-eyed bugs eat chinch bugs.

3rd When appropriate, first try non-chemical approaches and least toxic pesticides such as insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils and Bt products.

4th Spot treat. If chinch bugs or weeds are the problem, don’t treat the entire lawn – only the affected area. If one out of ten shrubs have scale, treat only the infested plant.

5th Be tolerant! Low levels of pests will do minimal damage to plants and many are a source of food for beneficials.

6th The label is the law! Read pesticide labels carefully for information on using pesticides and disposing of left-over chemicals and containers.

FLORIDA YARD ACTIONS

- Check plants regularly. Walk around your yard every week and observe your plants and lawn for signs of problems. Credit: 2 inches.

- Avoid routine applications of pesticides. Treat only affected areas rather than spraying your entire lawn or yard. (Require that your maintenance company follow these strategies.) Credit: 3 inches.

- Know five beneficial insects that provide natural control of harmful pests. Credit: 2 inches.

- Use environmentally-friendly pesticides such as horticultural oils, Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) and insecticidal soaps. These effective, safe materials can control most plant pests. Credit: 2 inches.

- Wherever possible use non-chemical approaches to pest control, such as pruning off affected areas, hand-removing insects, etc. Credit: 3 inches.

Total Inches

Friendly Fungus? Aschersonia is a fungus that attacks whitefly nymphs on citrus trees. The term beneficial applies to bacteria, birds, insects or any other organism that keeps pest populations under control.
Keeping rain and sprinkler water on our yards — and out of stormdrains — reduces pollution of our bays, rivers and lakes. Because water washes off our yards, it is important to reduce the amount of pollutants on our property. The FY&N Handbook shows the benefits of having swales in your yard and using pervious surfaces for patios and walkways.

Making a Rain Barrel

Rain barrels are a great way to reduce stormwater runoff and to save water for a dry spell. If you have gutters on your house, you may be able to collect 55 gallons of water during a 1/2-inch rain by connecting a downspout to a rain barrel or cistern.

**Tools:**
- Electric Drill
- 15/16" Drill Bit
- Sabre Saw
(you can use a hand drill & hand saw)

**Supplies:**
- Plastic Drum (55 gal. best)
- 3/4" Spigot (with male threads)
- PVC Cement
- Caulk

**Directions:** Use only barrels that have carried food products!

1. Drill 15/16" hole at the first even part of barrel, about 6" to 8" from bottom.

2. Screw 3/4" spigot into hole (should have a snug fit).

3. When spigot is about 3/4" of the way in, apply PVC cement to threads and finish tightening.

4. If using a downspout, use a sabre saw to cut a hole in lid to fit spout. After inserting down spout, caulk around the hole.

5. Other option: Take off the lid of a drum or trash can and cover the opening with a fine fiberglass screen. Place the container where water flows off your roof.

6. Elevate barrel on 2 to 3 cement blocks to allow easy access to the spigot. (If you want more pressure, raise the barrel higher above the ground.)

7. You may want to add a second spigot at the top of the barrel so you can direct the overflow through a hose into a specific part of your yard.
Let only rain down the drain! While stormwater often travels through pipes under our roads just like sewage, it is *not* treated at a waste treatment plant. Instead stormwater flows directly into ponds, lakes, rivers and bays.

**FLORIDA YARD ACTIONS**

- Where possible, direct downspouts and gutters to drain onto the lawn, plant beds or containment areas where rain will soak into the soil rather than run off the yard. Credit: 1 inch.

- Decrease soil erosion by planting groundcovers where lawn grass doesn't thrive, such as under trees or on steep slopes. Credit: 2 inches.

- Use mulch, bricks, flagstone, gravel, or other porous surfaces for walkways, patios and drives. Credit: 1 inch.

- Collect and store rain runoff from your roof in a rain barrel or cistern. Credit: 2 inches.

- Create swales (low areas) or terracing to catch, hold and filter stormwater. Credit: 3 inches.

- Pick up after pets. This will help reduce bacterial and nutrient pollution entering stormdrain systems. Credit: 1 inch.

- Clean up oil spills and leaks on the driveway. Instead of using soap and water, spread cat litter over oil, sweep it up and then throw away in the trash. Credit: 2 inches.

- Sweep grass clippings, fertilizer and soil from driveways and streets back onto the lawn. Remove trash from street gutters before it gets washed into stormdrains. Credit: 2 inches.

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**Total Inches**

**Note:** Barrels come in many sizes, shapes and colors.

- Barrels either have sealed lids or lids that can be removed. Barrels with sealed lids have two small round openings. They have flat bottoms and are more stable. Barrels with removable lids have larger openings making cleaning out debris easier.

- Drums made of white plastic seem to disintegrate more quickly in the sun.

- Food-grade drums are also available in 48 gallon and 42 gallon sizes.
Wildlife
(See pages 21-23 in FY&N Handbook)

With more than 1,200 kinds of animals, Florida ranks third in the nation in wildlife diversity.

Providing adequate food, water and shelter can increase the number and variety of species that live in your yard.

Butterflies add beauty to our yards and pollinate plants.

Protect butterfly larvae and provide them the plant food they need.

Frogs help keep mosquitoes and other unwanted insects under control. They also serenade us at night, especially after a good rain.

Aquascaping for You and Wildlife

Even small backyard ponds are beneficial to wildlife. A balanced system including fish and plants won’t need a pump or filters (as long as you don’t feed the fish).

- Flexible PVC or rubber liners allow you to create the pond shape you want. Create a 9-inch wide shelf, about 9 to 12 inches below the water line, for potted aquatic plants. Walls should have a 20 degree slope.

- Preformed ponds are usually rugged, made of fiberglass or PVC. They can be placed above or below the ground.

FLORIDA YARD ACTIONS

- Plant vines, shrubs and trees that provide cover, nesting areas, or food for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Credit: 3 inches.

- Provide a water source, such as a bird bath or a small pond, for wildlife. Credit: 1 inch.

- Provide wildlife shelters such as a bat house, bird house, brush pile or a dead tree. Credit: 1 inch.

- Identify five kinds of wildlife critters (insects, reptiles, animals, birds, etc.) that live in your yard. Credit: 2 inches.

Total Inches
Waterfront property owners realize the special contribution our bays and waterways make to their quality of life. They also understand how fragile these natural treasures can be.

**FLORIDA YARD ACTIONS**

- Remove invasive exotic aquatic plants by cutting, pulling or raking. After using herbicides, remove dead plant material from the water to reduce pollution. Credit: 2 inches.

- Decrease wave action and increase habitat by placing clean native limestone rock in front of your seawall. Credit: 3 inches.

- Protect your native shoreline plants. (For example: mangroves in salt water; pickerelweed and duck potato in fresh water). Never prune mangroves or remove other vegetation without first seeking proper guidelines and permits. Credit: 2 inches.

- Establish a 10-30 foot “no fertilizer, no pesticide” zone along your shoreline. Credit: 2 inches.

- If possible, plant a border of low-maintenance plants between your lawn and shoreline/seawall to absorb nutrients and provide wildlife habitat. Credit: 2 inches.

- Where feasible, plant native aquatic vegetation in front of your seawall or along your shoreline. Credit: 4 inches.

Total Inches for All Florida Yard Actions: ___
Florida Yards & Neighborhoods is a program of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

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For lawn & gardening information on the internet visit the University of Florida Website: http://hammock.ifas.ufl.edu/


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FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS

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