

Managing Yard Pests Responsibly

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques are an effective defense against pests while minimizing impact on the environment, your wallet, and workload.

- Best tip to prevent pests is proper planting, watering, and fertilizing.
- Inspect your plants frequently to detect problems early. Be familiar with how the plant should look. That will help you see problems before they are out of control.
- If not sure what the insect is, contact the Extension Service to help you identify it.
- Learn what are common insect pests on your plants and know there are helpful insects that feed on those pests that are eating your plants.
- Tolerate some insect damage and leaf disease on plants. No one can maintain an insect- and disease-free landscape, and a little damage will not hurt your plants.
- But if you must start with low impact techniques: remove affected plant parts, handpick insects, apply water spray.
- If applying a pesticide, start with the least toxic chemicals (insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils).
- Best to test product on small portion of the plant and wait three days to make sure it doesn't burn the plant.
- Spot-treat only where the pest is present and not over entire plant.
- Apply pesticides during the cooler part of the day. Heat combined with soaps, horticultural oils, and other pesticides can injure your plants.
- Avoid using broad-spectrum insecticides. They are not selective, meaning they also kill helpful insects.
- **Read and follow all label instructions!!! Use products only on recommended plants.**



Aphids



Mealybugs



Scale



Whiteflies

Did You Know?

- Over pruning a/k/a “hurricane pruning” robs nutrients from feeding the palm!
- Currently, two citrus diseases (Citrus Canker and Citrus Greening) are attacking homeowner and commercial trees. Until the diseases are under control your citrus tree may only live a short life span in your yard.
- The Florida Keys major vegetable growing season is October through April.



UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension Services
<http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu> is a free educational resource available to answer your plant and insect questions.

See our [website](#) for regional plant clinic schedules and the “Monroe County Extension IFAS Blog”
<http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/monroeco>

Stay up-to-date with the latest insects and diseases, pruning practices, and how to grow a vegetable garden at the University of Florida Solutions for Your Life website
<http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com>

For tropical fruit tree information, go to:
<http://trec.ifas.ufl.edu/fruitscapes>

For palm care and pruning, visit:
<http://flrec.ifas.ufl.edu>; look in left column for Palm Production and Maintenance.



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City and County Tree Pruning and Removal

Contacts:

Key West Urban Forester: 305-809-3768

Marathon Planner: 305-289-4109

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Village Biologist: 305-664-6427

Admin Planning: 305-664-6426

Monroe County

Biologist (Marathon): 305-289-2537

Biologist (Key Largo): 305-453-8730

Biologist (Key Largo): 305-453-8731

FREE Mulch

Keys Energy Services: 305-295-1010

Florida Keys Electric Co-op: 305-852-2431

Monroe County Roads & Bridges

Lower Keys: 305-797-4929

Upper Keys: 305-852-7161

Contact local tree services throughout the Keys for free mulch deliveries.

Monroe County Extension Services

Key West Office:

1100 Simonton Street, Suite 2-260

305-292-4501

<http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu>

Key Largo Office:

102050 Overseas Highway, Room 244

Newcomers Guide to Landscaping in the Florida Keys



Welcome to the challenges and rewards of designing and maintaining a Florida Keys landscape.

First, let's get grounded with a few key facts.

- The Florida Keys are in USDA Hardiness Zones 11a (Key Largo to Marathon) and 11b (Marathon through Key West). Average annual temperature is 77°F, with a range from 41°F to 95°F. Frost free!!!
- The Florida Keys are a chain of islands ranging in elevation from sea level to 18 feet. Plants may be subject to salt winds and salt water flooding due to storm surges, high tides, and sea level rise.
- Our soils (Key Largo Limestone and Miami Oolite) are alkaline, with a pH range from 7.2 to 8.2.
- Rainy/hurricane season extends from June through November. The rest of the year is considered to be the dry season. On average, rainfall is about 40 inches per year, with most rainfall occurring during the rainy season.

Right Plant, Right Place

Achieving a healthy, low-maintenance home landscape starts with putting the right plant in the right place.



- Match plants with site conditions based on USDA zone, water and light requirements, soil conditions, salt and wind tolerance, and other factors.
- When selecting a tree for your yard, size matters! Be aware of the mature size of plants and make site-appropriate selections. Avoid planting trees that will grow over 20 feet tall under the power lines. Contact your local Keys utility for information.
- Plants well-suited to the site need less irrigation and fertilizer, and are more resistant to pest infestation.
- Consider planting natives as they are adapted to our climate and high pH soils. Use the “Natives for Your Neighborhood” website <http://regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/default.asp>
- Eliminate invasive exotic plants. Depending upon where you live in the Keys, you may need a permit.

Water Efficiently

Fresh water is a limited resource in the Florida Keys.



Our potable water is pumped to the Keys from the mainland through a 130-mile long transmission line by the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority (FKAA). Monroe County water restrictions are in place. To learn more, visit the South Florida Water Management District website <http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/xweb%20-%20release%203%20water%20conservation/florida%20friendly%20landscaping>

Additional water can be collected through rainbarrels and cisterns.

Overwatering landscape can cause disease, pollution, and pest problems and is an unnecessary expense in time and money.

Waterwise advice:

- Choose drought tolerant native plants
- Water only as needed
- Hand water when possible
- Water in the morning (4 a.m. to 8 a.m.)
- Group plants by water needs
- Use mulch to conserve moisture

Fertilize Appropriately

In addition to wasting money, time, and water, too much fertilizer can weaken a plant, promote disease, invite pests, and harm nearshore waters.

- **Remember, if you can't use the correct fertilizer, you're better off not fertilizing at all!**
 - Fertilize only as needed by using correct nutrients.
 - Palms and turf have different nutritional needs. In our alkaline soils, common turf deficiencies are nitrogen and iron, while palms need potassium, magnesium, manganese, and boron.
 - Do NOT use turf fertilizers within 50 feet of a palm! But DO use an “improved palm special” 8-2-12 landscape fertilizer on turf and all ornamental plants in mixed landscapes.
 - Acid-loving plants grown in alkaline soils will show micronutrient deficiencies.
 - Do not use “Weed and Feed” as these herbicides and fertilizers can injure some trees and shrubs.
- Direct fertilizer to the plants not the nearshore waters.
- Don't fertilize within 10 feet of a body of water or before a heavy rain.
 - Use slow release fertilizers. Most fertilizers need to be watered-in with a 1/4 inch of water to move fertilizer just below the soil surface to plant roots.
 - Sweep up spills.
 - Follow label directions or IFAS fact sheet recommendations.

Organic fertilizers, such as manure or compost, are an excellent source of nutrients. By building a compost pile, you can use local resources such as kitchen scraps, yard waste, and sea grasses.

Using your landscape trimmings onsite reduces the amount of curbside trash going to Broward County landfill and incinerator.

Mulch

A layer of mulch helps maintain soil moisture, improves soil conditions, controls weeds, reduces runoff, protects plants from weed whacker and mower damage, and adds beauty to the landscape.



- Mulch is made of plant materials including your own yard trimmings and collected rinsed sea grass.
- Cypress and pea rock are not recommended.
- When applying mulch, keep it away from trunks at a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Mulch under the entire plant canopy and replenish as needed.
- Free mulch numbers are listed under city and county contacts.

Compost

- Yard trimmings, kitchen scraps, and sea grasses can be collected.
- Supplies nutrients and reduces the need for fertilizer.
- Improves soil structure, loosens compacted soils, increases water holding capacity, and lowers pH.

Attracting Wildlife

- Make your yard a sanctuary for birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other creatures.
- Use a diversity of plants in varying heights, flower types, and fruits.
- Supply food, water, and shelter.
- Limit insecticides.
- Keep the kitty indoors.