

Fertilization

Lawns, shrubs, flowerbeds, trees, etc. require nutrients for growth. Many of the nutrients needed are obtained from the soil.



However, in most soils, supplemental nutrients from packaged fertilizers, composted organic material or specific minerals such as lime, iron, etc. are needed.

- To help determine what nutrients are in the soil and what, if any, should be added it is advisable to have your soil tested.
- Your County Extension office (Walton or Okaloosa) can test your soil for a small fee or provide you with a kit to send to the University of Florida Soil Testing Lab. Results from a soil test can enable you to make better decisions regarding your plant and fertilizer choices.
- The frequency and timing of fertilizer applications is dependent upon the grass variety, ornamentals/flowers, trees and shrubs. As a general rule, fertilizers should be applied to lawns only during the active growing season and not when dormant. In the Panhandle, fertilizer applications should generally not be made before April 1 and after mid- to late September. Pre-emergent herbicides should be applied prior to fertilizer applications with post-emergent herbicides applied according weed appearance, temperature and weather conditions. In all instances, you should not exceed the label recommendations.
- Please check with your landscape contractor, extension service personnel or independent contractors experienced with plant cultivars, local soils and growing requirements for help, as necessary

Pests and Diseases

Although Florida's climate is conducive to outdoor activities of residents and tourists throughout the year, it is also favorable to problems in our lawns and landscape due to insect pests, plant diseases and weeds.



• **Fact # 1:** Problems with insect pests and plant diseases can be greatly minimized by initially selecting plants

that have minimal insect problems or are disease-free varieties. Unfortunately, our three ARB approved lawn varieties (St. Augustine, Bermuda and Zoysia) may all incur common insect pests e.g. chinch bugs, mole crickets, sod webworms, fall armyworms and grubs, whereas many plant varieties and trees may be infested with whiteflies, scales, aphids, mites, thrips or mealybugs.

- **Tip # 1:** To handle problems with any of the aforementioned pests, regularly inspect (once weekly) your lawn, landscape plants and trees. Early detection of pests is important in minimizing potential damage.

- **Fact # 2:** There are also many "beneficial" insects that feed on harmful plant and lawn pests. These include lady beetles, green lacewing larvae and adults, big-eyed bugs, earwigs, etc.



- **Tip # 2:** The practice of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is recommended wherein management of pests (insects, diseases and weeds) incorporates the identification of the pest problem, spot treating the affected areas of the lawn or plant only, and initially using the least toxic chemicals to people, wildlife and pets (e.g. pyrethrums, horticultural oils, or *Bacillus thuringiensis*).
- **Tip # 3:** When using any toxic pesticides always wear protective gloves, boots and clothing and read the pesticide label regarding proper use, dosage levels, clean-up and disposal of unused material and containers.
- **Tip # 4:** If a landscaper performs these pest services for you, be certain they are practicing IPM and not just routinely applying pesticides!

Landscaping Standards/Guidelines

Specific questions regarding landscaping standards or revitalization procedures should refer to the SOA Architectural Review Board guidelines, your neighborhood Association guidelines, or ARB personnel, as appropriate.

Reference: UF IFAS Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook



Sandestin
OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC

Sandestin Landscape
"Best Management
Tips and Practices"

THESE “TIPS AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES” ARE INTENDED AS A GUIDE TO HELP YOU IN ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL AND ATTRACTIVE LANDSCAPE. RESULTS MAY VARY WITH EACH YARD. OWNERS SHOULD CONSULT/DISCUSS WITH THEIR LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL THE STEPS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE HEALTHIEST LANDSCAPE POSSIBLE.

Turf/Mowing

It is recommended that weekly mowing of lawns is a “Best Practice” to maintain a healthy and attractive lawn.

- On average, lawns should be mowed 43 times annually.
- Beyond mowing, lawn maintenance should include edging of all hardscape and soft edges of seasonal beds.
- Blowing or removal of grass clippings and leaves out of beds, driveways, walkways, and roadways should be included in your lawn maintenance agreement(s) with your landscape contractor.



Debris on Property

Every homeowner (including landscape contractors) should remove debris that accumulates on their property.

- Debris includes trash that collects in storm drains, drainage grates and along curbs and green waste (grass clippings) and other natural occurring nature deposits (e.g. dropping flowers, acorns, seedpods, leaves, limbs, etc.)



Pruning Detail

The pruning of shrubs and trees should be should be a “best practice” in maintaining an attractive landscape inclusive in any landscape maintenance agreement.

- Pruning schedules will depend on the shrub/tree variety and what is necessary to maintain optimum plant health and safety on your property.
- **Note:** Fast growing shrubs and trees that might interfere with walkways, sightlines or roadways should be managed, as necessary.
- Any trees adjacent to a street/roadway in the Sandestin Community must be pruned to **allow a 15 ft. clearance from the roadway.**

Irrigation

Water is among Florida’s most valued resources. Continued growth in population, tourism and agriculture has placed increasing pressure on our water supplies. As a 2,000-acre resort community it is incumbent upon everyone to practice “responsible irrigation management.” Good water conservation begins with both the homeowner and landscaper – “Be conscious of water use and strive to minimize waste and consumption.”

- A first “Best Practice” is to select plantings at your home site that require less irrigation and fertilizer, more resistant to pests and by matching plants with similar light and water requirements.



- **Rain sensors: Required on all irrigation systems per Florida statutes.** These sensors are designed to interrupt the cycle of an automatic irrigation system controller when a specific amount of rainfall has occurred. The use of rain sensors and a seasonally adjusted irrigation schedule can prevent wasteful over-irrigation. **NOTE:** The SOA pump stations providing water to neighborhood associations are equipped with rain sensors.
- **Irrigation Scheduling:** Time of Day: Irrigation systems should typically be on during the early morning hours 3:00 am to 7:00 am to minimize evaporation; watering during the 10:00 am to 5:00 pm period is not advised due to harsh climatic conditions (high temperatures, windy, relative humidity, etc.). Frequency: a) During the active growth period (March – September) the irrigation system should be on every 2 or 3 days; b) During the inactive period (October – February) the schedule should be between 10 – 14 days). The watering zones should be seasonally adjusted (%) according to the plants or turf grass. Well established, drought-tolerant plants, and established lawns may require little or no irrigation during inactive growth periods.
- **Frequency:** Florida soils have a low water holding capacity, thus each irrigation event will require from ½ - ¾ inch to properly wet our sandy soils. The amount of irrigation needed will depend on the sod variety or landscape plant’s needs for growth, fruiting or dormancy. Plants and turf grasses require more moisture during active growing periods (Spring, Summer) but require less moisture when they are not actively growing/dormancy (Fall, Winter) and may not require irrigation.
- **Maintenance:** During the growing season (flower beds, lawns, etc.) routinely check and adjust, the sprinkler system and adjust watering times, as needed. Repair/fix broken water lines, sprinkler heads, valves or other parts. A quarterly maintenance schedule of the sprinkler system is recommended to keep the system working efficiently and effectively. Sandestin owners on SOA irrigation water must repair “mainline breaks” within **48 hours.**

