



R&D Landscape & Irrigation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 24271 Jacksonville, FL. 32241  
(904) 737-9733 or (904) 858-3314

## **Recommended best management practices for residential landscape for homeowners in Brookwood at Nocatee**

- **Mowing Practice for St. Augustine Turf Lawns-** It is recommended that you mow at a height of 4” with sharp blades. Homeowners have a tendency to want to mow their lawn lower as they think it will reduce the frequency in which they have to mow. In a sense you could say this holds true in the fact that if you scalp or cut too low your lawn, it will eventually die out and you won’t have a lawn to mow, but you will have some unhappy neighbors and you will receive violation letters instructing you to re-sod your lawn. So cutting too low in the long run only creates more issues. Since you are probably only mowing your lawn and not your neighbors and friends and family, you should only need to sharpen your blades or blade once in the spring and once in the fall. If you notice that you are having to go over areas twice to fully cut all the grass blades, you should turn the mower off and inspect the blade or blades. Always turn the mower completely off before you do this. If the blade feels more rounded than a sharp edge, you can run a file on it, or you can take the mower in for the blade or blades to be sharpened. In the winter months, we recommend cutting much less frequently and even allowing the lawn to remain at 4” or so as this will help insulate and protect once freezes start. The worst thing you can do is again cut your lawn low or cut it right before anticipated freeze. This only exposes your roots and spares up for greater potential freeze damage. When you are mowing your lawn, we recommend cross cutting or altering your mowing pattern. This will help prevent ruts or tracks in your lawn.
- **Trimming methods for shrubs-** When you are pruning or trimming your shrubs, you again want to use sharp trimmers, regardless on gas powered, electric, or manual shears. Different ornamental shrubs require different trimming, some more frequent than others, we recommend that you never remove more than 1-3” of growth off shrubs unless they are fast growers like Ligustrums, or Viburnums. Azaleas, and ornamental grasses can be pruned more heavily but there are specific times of the year to do this. You can search online for help with this, you can also call the UF extension office for advice on this as well.
- **Pruning of trees-** You will from time to time, need to trim your trees in your landscape, such as raising the tree canopies, or pruning your Palm Trees or cutting back your Crape Myrtles. We recommend on keeping your tree canopies raised up at least 6’. This can be done with a hand saw, loppers, or even a chain saw. If you are removing a full limb, its best to take it off back to the tree and not leave a sharp piece of the limb sticking out. If you are trimming off low portions of a longer limb, we recommend you take it back to the base of the main limb. When pruning Palm Trees, we recommend you only remove the dead frowns that are hanging down toward the ground. You do not need to or want to “hurricane cut” your palm trees. This robs the palms of nutrients to fuel it, that it gets from the palm frowns. You can remove the seed pods and base boots on the palm but it’s not healthy to slick the palm itself. As for Crape Myrtles, we recommend not pruning it unless its hitting your house or limbs are growing down. If you do wish to cut back your Crape Myrtle, we recommend only taking off the top 2’-3’ max. Spanish Moss will not kill your trees, it will weaken the structure by creating unnecessary weight, you can remove by hand or use of a soft rake. You can also contact a licensed fertilization company and they can spray a product, normally Copper Sulfate that will eradicate the moss. From time to time you will see



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bark on Crape Myrtles flake off, this isn't a health issue to be concerned with.

- **Weed control in plant beds and cement areas-** You live in Florida, you will have to deal with weeds in your plant beds and sometimes even in cement areas at the expansion joints or crevices. You can purchase Round-Up or Round-Up generic non select herbicide that eradicates weeds. We recommend you follow the label instructions and don't spray when rain is forecasted or on a windy day. Be careful spraying cement cracks as the chemical can run down and kill the edges of your lawn. It only takes a little spray contact with targeted weed to work, you don't have to soak it.
- **Mulch-** Mulch doesn't prevent weeds and mulch can add value to a landscape if done correctly. All mulch can float away, so the only option is to either use rubber mulch or rocks and both are extremely costly. When using mulch, be sure to not apply more than 2-3 inches, and don't smother the plants, or the root balls. You also want to be careful not to mulch up against the base or foundation of your home. This can trap moisture up against the foundation as well as encourage termites.
- **Fertilization-** We recommend you fertilize or hire a licensed fertilization contractor to fertilize your lawn area (6) applications a year. With (2) of their applications being herbicide for weed control. If you select a provider for this, be sure to confirm they will provide you a warranty to replace sod if it dies to Cinch bugs or fungus, if you take their full program. Most companies full program is (6) applications, others may want (8) applications, but (6) should be enough. Be clear with them that they provide service calls in between scheduled applications to address issues such as weeds, insects or fungus. Be aware certain weeds such as Crabgrass have no visible product since the EPA removal of certain products for residential use. Areas with Crabgrass will have to be killed off with non-select herbicide and re-sodded. Turf fungus is also a real problem that has to be addressed quickly. Water plays a major role in fungus prevention and fungus control. When you see of suspect fungus, you need to turn off your irrigation timer. Fungus areas need to dry out, as well as be treated. If you plan on doing your fertilizer yourself, you will need to do some product research yourself to maximize your results. Shrubs and trees should be fertilized at least (4) times a year. With most trees, twice a year is good. Granular or fertilizer spikes around the drip line or root ball of the tree is recommended. If you fertilize your shrubs yourself, do not leave fertilizer on top of the plant leaves, you want the fertilizer on the root balls of the soil at the base of the plants.
- **Irrigation-** Watering is critical in having an attractive landscape. Too much water is just as bad as too little water. The county guidelines and restrictions is twice a week in the summer months, and once a week in the winter months. Rain sensors help but don't work 100% of the time. You want to inspect your irrigation from time to time to ensure its covering all of your areas correctly. Rotor zones should run no longer than sprays, almost twice as long, for instance, in the heat of the summer months, we would normally run Rotor zones (rotors are the irrigation heads that rotate back and forth) 45 minutes, and we would run the sprays (sprays are the irrigation heads that are fixed in one specific spray pattern and don't move), 15 to 25 minutes. You are allowed to run the irrigation longer during the allotted run days, but you are not supposed to run it more days. You can, if you add to your landscape, sod, plants,



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flowers, run it more days to help get them established, but you should isolate the zones or sections of your irrigation that supports the new landscape. In the winter months, you can leave the run times, but cut back to once per week. Again if you get a lot of rain, we recommend you turn off your timer to allow the ground to dry out, before you turn your timer back on. If you have any questions or need further advice, you can reach us at our office at (904)737-9733.

Thank You,

Tom Rowand Jr.  
President  
R&D Landscape & Irrigation.