



STATE ISSUE: LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION STANDARDS

POSITION: FNGLA supports the development, implementation and recognition of landscape irrigation standards which incorporate the latest irrigation technologies that, promote water conservation, embrace sound, horticultural scientific principles such as “right plant in the right place,” are economically feasible and recognize the importance of residential/commercial education and outreach programs that promote proper applications of landscape irrigation.

BACKGROUND: As Florida’s population continues to increase, so does the demand on Florida’s limited water resources. Florida law requires the regional water management districts to permit all reasonable beneficial uses of water. The law also requires each district to compile data based on current and 20-year projected water use demand curves. The data clearly shows Florida water resources will be in short supply in the near future.

Historically, water use debates have centered on agriculture’s use of water. However, the focal point has changed as a much greater emphasis is now being placed on water used in residential and commercial landscapes. In fact, several local governments have taken this opportunity to develop and adopt landscape ordinances based on emotional beliefs rather than sound, horticultural science. Most commonly, local governments attribute water conservation and minimal fertilizer inputs only to native plants and minimal, if any, to turf areas. To the contrary, horticultural science shows that low inputs can be created without regard to plant variety (native or non-native) and to turf areas, as long as one simply puts “the right plant in the right place.”

FNGLA believes initiatives such as the identification of landscape irrigation standards, coupled with aggressive education programs for developers, landscape industry professionals, and homeowners, will create an overall awareness and ultimate conservation of our water resources. In addition to the landscape irrigation standards, there are a wealth of programs (including FNGLA’s Certified Horticultural Professional program, the Florida Green Industries’ BMP program and the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Florida Friendly Landscape program) which are purposely designed to educate every Floridian from the gardening novice to the landscape professional.

Florida is literally at a cross-road. In order to sustain the way of life Floridians expect and allow the State of Florida to continue to grow, everyone must think outside of the box for solutions. Continued water availability is critical to the success of Florida’s nursery and landscape industry in serving residential and commercial consumers. FNGLA seeks and promotes scientific research designed to establish the water needs of plants, identify economically feasible, efficient and user-friendly irrigation technologies and the continue to develop beneficial new plant varieties that are water efficient, pest resistant and easy to maintain. The development of horticulturally sound, science-based landscape irrigation standards will conserve Florida’s precious water resources and benefit all Floridians.