

Water Wednesday Program Educates Urban Residents about Actionable Water Conservation Practices

Tia Silvasy,

UF/IFAS Extension Orange County,
Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Yilin Zhuang,

Water Resources Regional Specialized Agent,
UF/IFAS Extension Central District, Mid-
Florida Research and Education Center

Introduction

Water Wednesday

A collaborative, multi-county extension program that addresses:

- water quality
- water quantity
- conservation practices



Introduction

Team Members

- **Yilin Zhuang**, Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, Apopka, FL
- **Tiare Silvasy**, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County, Orlando, FL
- **Tina McIntyre**, UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County, Sanford, FL
- **Morgan Pinkerton**, UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County, Sanford, FL
- **Krista Stump**, UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County, Kissimmee, FL
- **Brooke Moffis**, UF/IFAS Extension Lake County, Tavares, FL



Introduction



Topics include:

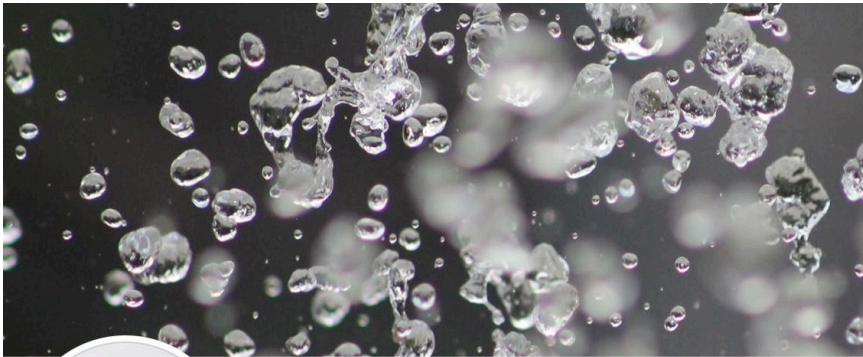
- Florida Water Policies and Regulations
- Composting for a Waterwise Landscape
- Mulching
- Landscape Design
- Precision Agriculture and Smart Irrigation
- Using water filters inside the Home
- The Power of Your Pond
- Florida Springs
- Water: Florida's Lifeblood
- Florida's wetlands
- Emergency water supplies
- Build Your Own Rain Barrel
- Stormwater Ponds
- Landscaping with Reclaimed Water
- Growing Food in Urban Areas

Water Wednesday Methods

- Talk by UF/IFAS agent or specialists
- Virtually delivery
- Weekly
- 45-minute talk on issues pertaining to Florida's water resources



Methods



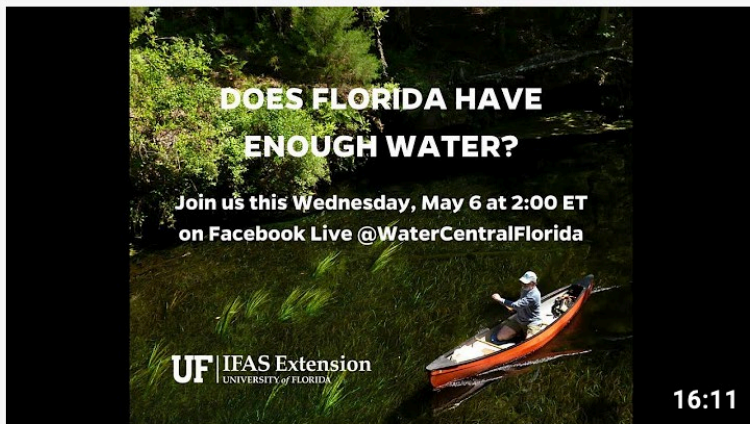
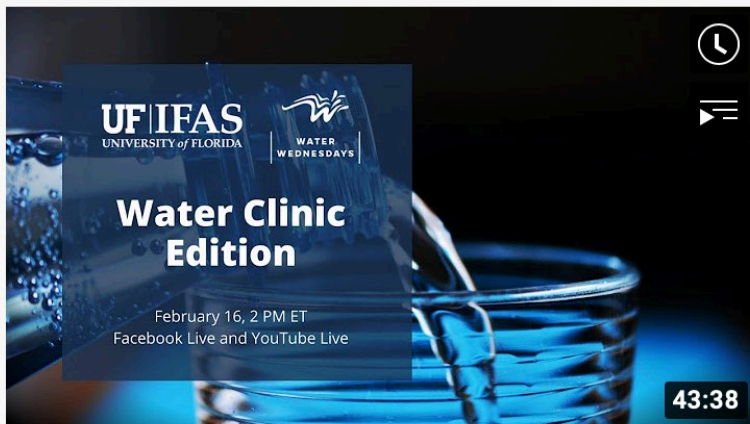
- May 2019 to June 2021
- Conducted 46 webinars
- 965 group participants (Zoom and Facebook Live)
- Program is ongoing
- Find future programs at <https://www.facebook.com/WaterCentralFlorida>



UF IFAS Extension Central District - Water Resources

@WaterCentralFlorida · ★ 5 (1 review) · College & university

Methods



- Webinar recordings reached an additional:
- **9,440** views on Facebook
- **3,100** views on YouTube



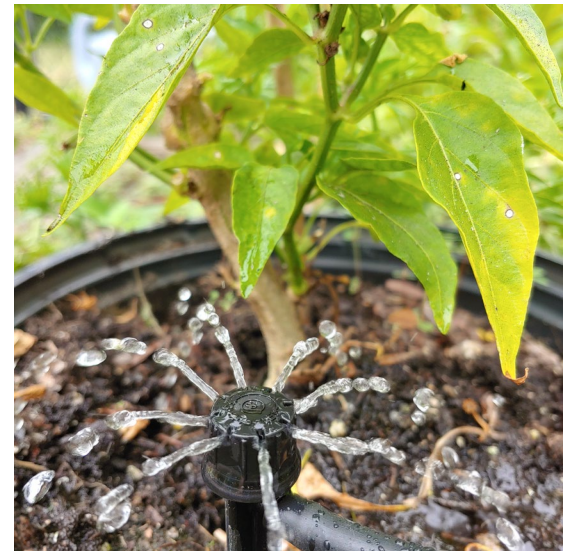
UF IFAS Extension - Water Resources

156 subscribers

Results – Knowledge Gain

A retrospective post survey was administered to assess knowledge gain, respondents (n=179) indicated:

- **100%** improved their understanding of the importance of protecting Florida’s water resources
- **91%** gained knowledge on residential water conservation practices
- **83%** improved their awareness of residential water quality protection practices



Water Wednesday educates about efficient irrigation practices such as microirrigation

Results – Intent to Change

Respondents also indicated the intent to adopt new practices including:

- **83%** indicated they would reduce the water use in their yard and garden
- **75%** intended to reduce plastic use
- **100%** indicated they would tell others of the importance of protecting water resources



Water Wednesday educates about managing invasives and protecting water bodies with beneficial plants

Results – 6-month Follow Up

In a follow-up survey sent in July 2021, respondents (n=45):

- **40%** indicated they understand better the challenges facing water
- **60%** claimed they increased their knowledge of water policy



Water Wednesday educates about slowing and sinking rainfall into the lawn and landscapes

Results – Participant feedback

Comments included:

- “This was extremely helpful for new Floridians”
- “I learned not to overwater my lawn”
- Most participants attended multiple webinars with 60% attending more than one, and almost 10% attending more than 10 webinars.



Water Wednesday educates about keeping grass clippings out of water bodies to protect water quality

Conclusion

Central Florida residents improved their knowledge of Florida's water issues and actions they can take to benefit water quantity and quality



Water Wednesday educates about water conservation in Florida

Questions and Comments?

Tia Silvasy,

UF/IFAS Extension Orange County,
Florida-Friendly Landscaping™
Tsilvasy@ufl.edu

Yilin Zhuang,

Water Resources Regional Specialized Agent,
UF/IFAS Extension Central District, Mid-
Florida Research and Education Center