

WATER USE PATTERNS IN FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES

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Efforts to mitigate residential outdoor water use increasingly include the promotion of Florida-Friendly Landscaping (FFL) based on its documented effectiveness. Targeted initiatives, however, require an understanding of mechanisms underpinning low irrigation use in single-family homes with regionally-appropriate landscaping. Based on survey data collected in 2017, this study identifies factors associated with irrigation practices among FFL clients. Results show that less than a third of survey participants belong to a homeowner's association (HOA) with rules regarding yard care while the majority are at least moderately familiar with landscape system components. Logistic regression estimates indicate that property values, water conservation attitudes, lawn grass, and in-ground irrigation system use significantly predict irrigation practices. Findings suggest that whereas water-saving yard-care is governed by aesthetic considerations, environmental concerns, and extensive knowledge of the landscape and irrigation system, it is further shaped by neighborhood-scale forces. Providing not just homeowners, but HOAs, with outreach materials that build on existing support for water conservation could augment adoption of low maintenance plants and sustainable practices in Florida's urban landscapes.

PRESENTER BIO: Dr. Morera is an anthropologist with expertise in the social dimensions of environmental sustainability and safety. She has extensive experience investigating the effectiveness of Extension-based education and natural resource conservation programs. Her work tracks end-user response to technological innovations. She has led several multidisciplinary projects exploring the opportunities and constraints that shape the uptake of conservation and preventive practices.