

Southern Living®

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**SHOW HOUSE SPECIAL!
24 PAGES OF
IDEAS FOR
YOUR HOME**

**SHENANDOAH
MOUNTAIN
GETAWAYS**

**QUICK &
DELICIOUS
SUMMER
SALADS**

Summer Cool

**DIG IN TO
LUSCIOUS
CHILLED
SUMMER
PIES**



LEMON ICEBOX PIE
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**OUR EASY GUIDE
TO CREPE MYRTLES**



Craftsman bungalow in a historic district of Longwood, Florida

Seven Ways To Save Water in Your Yard

These **savvy ideas** deliver a big wow factor—and a much smaller water bill. BY **GENE B. BUSSELL**



Before



Christina Lathrop

Christina Lathrop has always enjoyed relaxing in a garden more than watering one. No wonder. This landscape architect is also a busy working mom. She and Jeff Dix, owners of Dix.Lathrop and Associates in Longwood, Florida, made some smart planning decisions when restoring this 1925 Craftsman bungalow.

Given Florida's water-usage restrictions, the firm chose Florida-Friendly Landscaping (floridayards.org) techniques, which teach homeowners the basics of environmentally conscious gardening, from efficient watering to selecting drought-tolerant plants.

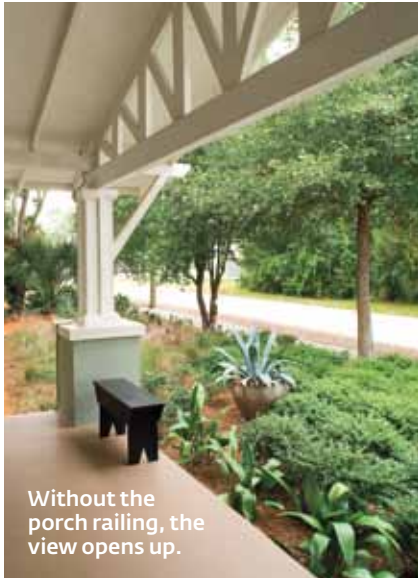
Try some of Christina and Jeff's ideas—micro-irrigation systems, recycling, heat-loving native plants, and other innovative water-saving techniques—to keep your yard looking beautiful all year long. You'll save time and use less water.

1 SAY GOOD-BYE TO LAWN CARE.

Before, the lawn went right to the edge of the house. The designers replaced the large lawn with a natural area of drought-tolerant native and nonnative plants. To choose the right natives, they also researched local soils to ensure their selections would be in the right spots to thrive. ➔

2 TIE THE HOUSE TO THE LANDSCAPE.

Just removing an existing porch railing opened up everything, but the team also used gutters on the porch roof to direct runoff into a rain barrel. A hose connected to the rain barrel makes it easy to hand-water a few pots nearby. They also used a rain chain—another time-honored gardening trick—to guide water from the roof into a large pot on the porch.



Without the porch railing, the view opens up.



rain chain

rain barrel

There's no need to hide the rain barrel and rain chain when they look this good.



Pervious paving next to the mulched parking area helps guide water to the rain garden.

3 ADD A RAIN GARDEN.

A rain garden is a depression in the landscape where runoff can collect. It's filled with plants (so don't picture a giant mud hole), and the water that collects there slowly soaks back into the landscape (over a 24- to 36-hour period). The experts at your local nursery can help you choose plants that better handle being inundated with water for brief periods. "The stepping pads and river stones control the force of water coming off the roof above, and the stones between the stepping pads allow that water to flow directly into the adjacent rain garden out back," Christina explains. ➔



stepping pads

BELOW AND RIGHT: Micro-irrigation gets water right where the plants are, reducing unnecessary water usage and loss.



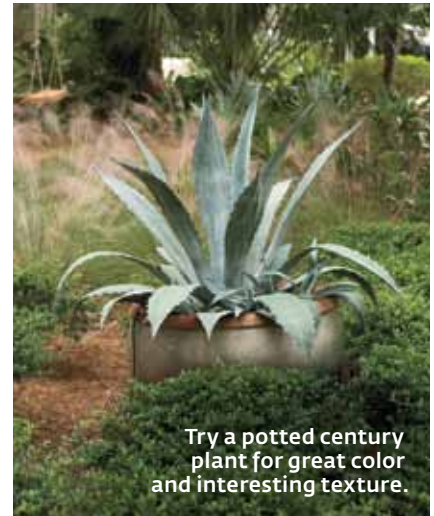
In the natural garden, a recycled truck wheel became a fire pit.

4 WATER WISELY.

Because it delivers water right next to targeted plants, micro-irrigation uses a much lower volume of water. This system also divides your planting area into zones. Once plants in a particular zone are established, that zone can be turned off so it isn't being watered unnecessarily. A wireless rain sensor automatically shuts down the system after a rain, conserving water.



This swing is made from reclaimed indigenous cypress.



Try a potted century plant for great color and interesting texture.



5 RECYCLE CREATIVELY.

Jeff made the swing of recycled native cypress from a local source. Instead of pavement, he and Christina specified a mulched parking area, yet another area for rainwater to be absorbed, thereby reducing runoff. The sitting area in the natural garden has a fire pit made of an old truck wheel.

6 COLOR WITH CONTAINERS.

Pots let you put color where you want it and control watering. Christina likes succulents and bougainvilleas for containers that need little care.

7 PLAN BEFORE YOU PLANT.

"If your garden really works, you won't have to," Christina says. So plan ahead. Create a landscape that's functional and fun—one that brings you joy and relaxation, not an endless to-do list. ➔

10 Drought-Tolerant Natives

Florida-Friendly Landscaping can include both native and nonnative plants.

Here are a few of our favorite natives used in this water-smart yard.

Trumpet honeysuckle
(*Lonicera sempervirens*)

Twining vine; red flowers in spring; likes sun; hummingbird favorite.



Goldenaster
(*Pityopsis graminifolia*)

Southeastern native; grows 2 feet high; likes full sun and sandy soil; long bloomer.

Longleaf pine
(*Pinus palustris*)

Classic pine of the Southeast; graceful, long needles; likes sun and deep, moist soil.



Beautyberry
(*Callicarpa americana*)

Clusters of purple berries in late summer and fall; sun or light shade; grows 6 feet.

Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)

Southeastern native; long blooming season; likes sun or shade; several colors.



Silver saw palmetto
(*Serenoa repens* 'Cinerea')

Grows 6-7 feet tall and wide; sun or light shade; hardy to 15 degrees.

Beach sunflower
(*Helianthus debilis*)

May be prostrate or upright; likes full sun; often seen growing on dunes.



Firebush
(*Hamelia patens*)

Butterfly and hummingbird favorite; blooms all summer; full sun; can grow 8-10 feet tall.

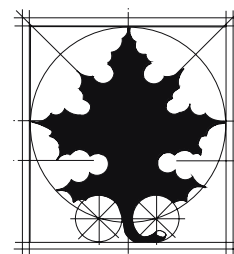
Pink muhly
(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

Native grass; grows 3-4 feet tall; likes sun or light shade; very showy plumes appear in early fall.



Powderpuff
(*Mimosa strigillosa*)

Fast-spreading ground cover with showy blooms; sun; grows 2-3 inches tall. *



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AND ASSOCIATES, INC.