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December 2023

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Mapping Out the Details

Production mapping underscores LMP's commitment to providing top-tier commercial landscaping services. We continuously monitor, analyze, and isolate weaknesses to improve the process after deployment, optimizing output and setting new benchmarks in the landscaping industry.

While all clients' properties are different, how they're serviced should be the same every time. A detailed blueprint of each property allows for a visual and strategic understanding of the tasks at hand and how a project should proceed to achieve the desired quality for its deliverables.

Quality Planning

Understanding a property's unique needs before work begins is part of our onboarding process. This allows us to plan and manage the project in the most efficient way possible. We divide the landscape into zones, assign tasks to our staff, and provide specific care instructions for each area.

Considering the most efficient way to manage a property, from the time it takes crews to accomplish each task to how many crew members are needed to how they flow through the property to get the job done right, all play into the LMP standards of project quality and meeting expectations.

The plan organizes the landscape into zones that provide a structure for crew assignment and identify specific care needs for landscape areas.

Increased Productivity

Productivity is about more than working fast and efficiently. It's about building strong relationships between team members, and improving communication and internal processes. The importance of its weekly production process is a checklist our maintenance crews use to ensure the job is done consistently and efficiently.

Our production maps guide how long each job should take, helping the crew be more efficient and manage their time. It's a procedure designed to deliver on our promises and define expectations for our crews, acting as an anchor for a streamlined workflow

Quality Control

Quality control is a top priority for us. We conduct monthly quality inspections to analyze our processes and identify areas of improvement. Our production maps make it easy to pinpoint areas where quality can be enhanced, allowing us to improve and deliver consistent results continuously.

Our ultimate goal is to exceed our clients' expectations with exceptional landscape maintenance. We're committed to providing top-tier commercial landscaping services, and our mapping technique allows us to improve and set new benchmarks in the industry continuously.



Tips on Caring for your Christmas Plants

Live plants reduce stress and clean indoor air by absorbing toxins, adding humidity, and producing oxygen. And because we live in a mild climate, when the tinsel comes down, some holiday plants can find new homes in our backyards! Let's explore some of Florida's best live plants for Christmas.



Rosemary looks and smells like the spirit of Christmas. Use on the kitchen counter to snip for savory holiday recipes, then let this sweet topiary live indoors in good light or in the garden to grow rosemary all year long. This herb is often recommended to budding gardeners since it is easy to grow, drought tolerant, and relatively resistant to pests and diseases.

Amaryllis can be forced to produce stunning flowers indoors during the Christmas season. Encourage early flowering by keeping at least one-half to two-thirds of the bulb above the soil line. After the holidays, plant its bulb in the garden between September and January and enjoy their spring blooms. They will perform best if planted with partial sun and well-drained soil. In heavy shade, they will be less vigorous and will flower poorly.

Cyclamen is comfortable indoors or outdoors during the cooler Florida season. The cyclamen often seen for sale as a houseplant during the holiday season is *Cyclamen persicum*, also known as the Florist's Cyclamen. Its pink, red, or white flowers provide a welcome spot of color during winter. Its dark-green-to-silvery leaves accent red, pink, or white flowers that twist and turn throughout this beautiful, dependable bloomer. Cyclamen grows best in a bright location without direct sunlight.

Norfolk Island Pine Trees are often used as miniature Christmas trees. They stay small indoors, but when planted outdoors, they can grow to heights of 60 to 80 feet! So, choose your plant's location judiciously. Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) is not an actual pine tree but rather a relative of the monkey puzzle tree.

Florida Holly Trees are among the most popular landscape trees for their hardiness, colorful berries, and go-anywhere size. This broad-leafed evergreen is beautifully shaped with a symmetrical, dense, broad pyramidal form. The spiny, shiny evergreen leaves are accented with clusters of red berries, which persist through fall and winter.

Christmas Cactus grown in natural light will flower when the days become shorter. If these plants are exposed to artificial light, like a streetlight, they will not set flower buds as expected.

Make sure the soil is well-drained and light. The plant stems or roots will rot if the soil holds too much water. Do not place the plant in a draft or near a heat source (vent, fireplace, or television to avoid bud drop). Another cause of bud drop is improper watering.

Landscape Tasks to Consider in December

Our growing season is twelve months long, even winter is not a completely dormant time of year. During the dry season, plants and grasses grow more slowly but nothing really stops growing.

Get Ahead of Issues

This is the time of year to work smart and get ahead of weeds, pests, and fast-growing non-native invasive plants. Non-native invasive plants are plants that are not from Florida and are known to spread extensively in natural areas. They negatively impact the environment by spreading so aggressively they shade out, overtake, or displace beneficial native plants.

Addressing Irrigation Issues

If adequate irrigation is not available, no landscape will survive in the Florida climate. This is a great time to address irrigation issues, since Mother Nature isn't providing lots of rainfall, it is easy to spot an irrigation problem. With the movement towards smart controllers, it would be wise to evaluate your current system to see if your landscape would be a candidate for such. Additionally, grass requires substantially more water than plants, so be sure to evaluate your landscape and decide if there are areas that could benefit from some adjustments.

Mulching

Mulch plays a crucial role this time of year. It is an easy and cost effective way to ensure your garden and landscape stays healthy through the winter months.

Many of our plants, shrubs, and trees, here in Central Florida don't cope very well in our cooler weather. Instead of having to replace plants, shrubs, and trees because they didn't make it through the winter, just apply mulch. It's a great investment!

Winter landscaping done right not only creates a beautiful environment for the season, but also sets the stage for a smoother transition into the busy spring and summer landscaping demands.

Cleanup

Winter in Florida may not bring the same level of leaf fall as other parts of the country, but keeping your yard tidy is still vital. When leaves and other debris accumulate on your property, they can create a cozy habitat for Florida pests. In addition, anything you leave on your lawn during the winter months can suffocate your grass and prevent it from getting the air and sunlight it needs to thrive.

Watch Out for Lawn Diseases

Dormant grasses are particularly vulnerable to lawn disease during winter, so it's important to keep a watchful eye for any signs of trouble. The best way to avoid lawn diseases during winter is by maintaining good lawn care practices throughout the year. This includes proper mowing, fertilization, and especially avoiding overwatering.

However, even with the best care, lawn diseases can still occur. Many fungi thrive in cooler temperatures and humid weather, making winter a prime time for lawn diseases to take hold. Look for any signs of disease, such as brown patches, discolored areas, or thinning grass.



**PREPARE
YOUR LAWN
& LANDSCAPE
FOR WINTER**

PHASE 1 WATER SH₂ORTAGE ORDER

Florida's ever-growing population has led to overconsumption and over-withdrawal from the aquifer, combined with the worsening effects of climate change. Our once abundant water supply is under threat. We all need to take this seriously, or Florida's water shortage could replicate the water crisis seen in California and the US western region.

Water levels at the aquifer are depleting, and there's a high risk of a widespread Florida water shortage in the next 30 years. To mitigate the looming crisis, officials are focusing on water conservation to reduce current water demand and meet future needs.

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) received lower than normal rainfall during its summer rainy season and currently has a 9.2-inch districtwide rainfall deficit compared to the average 12-month total. In addition, water levels in the District's water resources, such as aquifers, rivers, and lakes, are beginning to decline. **Tampa Bay Water**, which supplies water to most of the three-county area, could not completely refill the 15-billion-gallon C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir this summer due to the lower-than-normal rainfall.

As a result, the Southwest Florida Water Management District declared a Modified Phase I Water Shortage Order. The restrictions apply to all of Citrus, DeSoto, Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, and Sumter counties; portions of Charlotte, Highlands, and Lake counties; the City of Dunnellon and The Villages in Marion County; and the portion of Gasparilla Island in Lee County from Nov. 21, 2023, through July 1, 2024.

The Modified Phase I Water Shortage Order, does not change allowable watering schedules for most counties; however, it does prohibit "wasteful and unnecessary" water use, and twice-per-week lawn watering schedules remain in effect except where local governments have imposed stricter measures. Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota counties, along with the cities of Dunedin and Venice all have imposed a stricter one day per week water only day.

All should check their irrigation systems to ensure they are working properly. This means testing and repairing broken pipe leaks and fixing damaged or tilted sprinkler heads. Also, check your irrigation timer to ensure the settings are correct and the rain sensor works properly.

if your address ends

0 or 1 ► Water Only on Monday

2 or 3 ► Water Only on Tuesday

4 or 5 ► Water Only on Wednesday

6 or 7 ► Water Only on Thursday

8 or 9 ► Water Only on Friday

Unless your city or county already has stricter hours in effect, properties under two acres in size may only water before 8am or after 6pm.

Unless your city or county already has stricter hours in effect, properties two acres or larger may only water before 10am or after 4pm.

Low-volume watering of plants and shrubs (hand watering, micro-irrigation, soaker hoses) is allowed any day and any time.

Up to \$20,000 Available for Water Conservation Projects

Grants (cost-share reimbursements) of up to \$20,000 are available for water conservation projects that improve water use efficiency and help protect the region's water resources. Discover if you are eligible for the program.

The District's Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program offers reimbursement of up to 50% of costs and up to \$20,000 for water conservation projects. Projects such as irrigation system enhancements, plumbing fixture replacements, water pretreatment systems, and more are eligible while funds last. Visit WaterMatters.org/Wise to learn more about the program and how to apply.

Petition for Variance

A petition for a variance from year-round water conservation measures or water shortage restrictions is available if an alternative irrigation plan is proposed. To confirm that a variance is needed, check with our staff during normal business

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year is Here!

While the palm tree fronds don't fall to the ground like leaves, there is still a noticeable change in the air to signify fall in the Sunshine State.

Rainy Season Winds Down

The average temperature for a Florida winter day is 74 F and as we roll into December, precipitation drops in half compared to summer. The cooler temperatures and much drier air feel glorious after a long, hot summer. Florida's Dry Season has arrived, bringing a breath of fresh air after a long, sweltering Summer.

Beautiful Sunsets

As the days slowly become shorter, the sunset glow shows beautiful hues of yellows, reds, oranges, pinks and sometimes purples. During the autumn and winter seasons, the sun sits lower in the sky due to the tilt of the earth. The sunrays take longer to pass through more atmosphere before reaching the human eye. This allows the light to come into contact with more air molecules such as oxygen and nitrogen. The decrease in humidity and rain along with the dry, cooler air moving in from the north provide vivid colors because they are not being diminished by water molecules or other particles in the air.



Butterflies, Wildflowers and Beautyberries

You will notice butterflies popping out amongst the flowers flitting around in the fall blooms. Purple muhly grass begins to blanket the area, especially on back roads, adding color to the grasslands that have begun to transform from lush green to vibrant amber. Also adding a touch of purple and a sure sign of fall are the bright purple beautyberries growing under shady trees and trails.

Fewer Mosquitos

Fall is the start of our dry season and thankfully less precipitation gives pesky mosquitos and other biting insects fewer opportunities to breed.

Wildlife on the Move

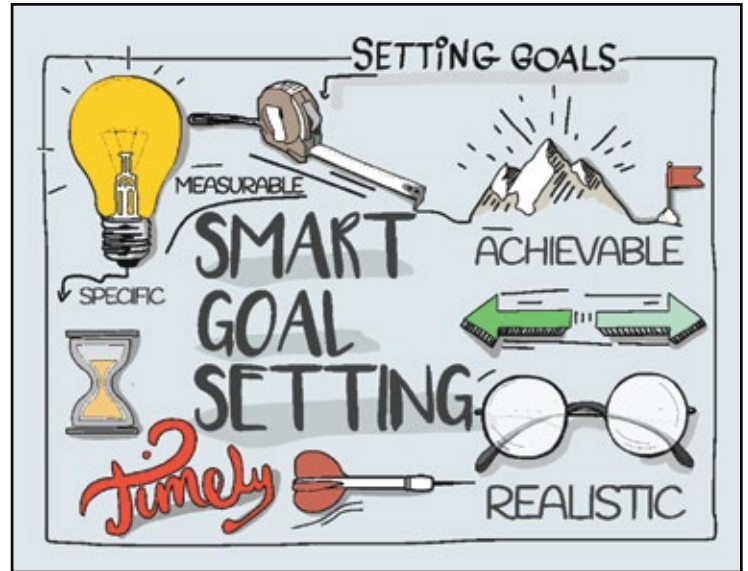
- Look for downy, hairy, red-bellied, and redheaded woodpeckers on suet feeders.
- Cedar waxwings come south for the winter. Their flocks can be seen on cedars, hollies, cherry laurels, privet, and other fruit plants.
- Birds from the north are beginning to fly to Florida and points south for the winter. Now is a good time to begin looking for hawks and other birds of prey as they return to build their nests. And they are just one species of many birds arriving.
- Bald eagles begin their nesting season. Look for spectacular aerial courtship displays.
- Sandhill cranes return in full force from their breeding grounds up north. (Only a small number live here all year round).
- Many yellow-rumped warblers and palm warblers will be in neighborhoods, natural areas, and yards, and gray catbirds have already arrived, and will be skulking (and cat-calling!) in thickets.
- Kinglets, phoebes, robins, and other northern songbirds have arrived for the winter.

Planning Ahead for 2024 Landscape Projects

As the year winds down and the holiday season approaches, landscape improvements may not be the first thing on your mind. Creating a landscape plan for next year is a key way to maximize your landscaping efforts, and there's no time like the present to start thinking about new projects.

In addition to avoiding a disruption to your property, long-range planning also allows you to schedule new additions and services at times of the year that maximize their viability and usefulness. By starting the conversation now, we can advise you on which tasks are best to handle during the fall and winter and which should be scheduled for warmer weather next year. An extended plan also allows you to schedule new projects in a way that fits your budget.

Even if your immediate plans only include a few modest improvements, a comprehensive plan will help you get the biggest long-term bang for your buck. With a solid plan of attack, you can set priorities and formulate manageable timelines so that your landscape comes together evenly over time.



OUR GRATITUDE NEVER TAKES A HOLIDAY



We're grateful for the amazing spirit of our LMP team, the strong partnerships we've built with our clients, and the love and support from our families and friends. As we approach Christmas, we want to extend our warmest wishes for a heartfelt and joyful holiday season. We also want to express our sincere appreciation to each and every client for choosing us and giving us the opportunity to serve you.

From all of us at LMP, we wish you happiness and peace not just during this Christmas, but throughout the coming year and beyond. Merry Christmas to all!

The **LMP** Team

Sarasota

(941) 556-9404

Serving: Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee, Sarasota

Tampa

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