

Growing Turfgrass in the Swale:

- **Sod type** - use shade tolerant grass such as Palmetto St. Augustine
- **Mowing** - increase the mowing height to 4" - for most rotary mowers use the highest setting. Also keep the mower blades sharp and well adjusted for a clean cut. No more than one third of the leaf blades should be removed with any mowing
- **Irrigation** - water on an "as-needed" basis (when leaf blades begin to fold up, wilt or when footprints remain visible after walking on the grass). Apply 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch of water per application. Also, make sure to water only on Wednesdays and Saturdays for odd addresses and Thursdays and Sundays for even address (after 5pm and before 10am)
- **Avoid parking** on the grass if possible. If not possible, then try not to park in the same spot each time. Alternating parking locations reduces tire damage and heat engine damage to the grass.
- **Pest Management** - be familiar with the signs and how to treat the number one pest of St. Augustine sod - the chinch bug.
- **Fertilization** - fertilize once or twice a year with a slow release fertilizer such as polymer coated 11-2-11. Or if palms are also in the swale use a slow release polymer coated 8-2-12.
- **Aeration** - soil compaction can be alleviated by loosening up the soil which allows more oxygen to reach the roots. Ponding water is the #1 sign of poor aeration. Aeration can be done by tilling up the soil before planting or by poking/drilling holes into the soil of the existing grass. In areas with particularly heavy compaction or a buildup of a thick sediment layer from water ponding, it is sometimes necessary to carefully remove the top few inches of soil, being careful to not damage the tree roots, and replace the topsoil with a free-draining soil mix composed of 70% silica sand and 30% muck.
- **Planting** – low, herbaceous (non-woody) planting material around parkway trees shall be permitted in a circular planting around base of trees. This planting is allowed to extend approximately three feet from the base of the tree and must be maintained at a maximum height of two feet. A few common examples of shade-tolerant, herbaceous, low growing plant material are Liriope, Wart Ferns, Red Congo, and Philodendron 'Burle Marx'.

For additional information refer to the following:

"Growing Turfgrass in the Shade" <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep072>

"Minimizing Traffic Damage to Your Florida Lawn" <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP071>