



LANDSCAPE CALENDAR  
**OUTDOOR  
LIVING**

# Easy, water-wise Gardening *Solutions*

■ ■ By Jon George

This Gainesville garden sports one of the hottest trends in home landscapes: drought tolerant plantings. When the going gets tough and there is no rain in the forecast, look to succulents to provide year round color and interest. Varying textures and contrasting foliage create a virtual coral reef in the garden.





### Gardening Tip #1

**Create a rock garden out of a dry, sunny space.** This problem spot (pictured above) was transformed into a rock garden complete with a dry river bed. River gravel winds between large stones set at interesting angles and anchors the plantings of sedums, succulents and sedge. Dramatic spires of the starfish plant (dyckia hybrids) bloom each spring here in North Central Florida and attract a variety of hummingbirds seeking nectar.



### Garden Tip #2

**Tired of mowing the lawn?** Try a synthetic turf option. Most people hear the term "artificial turf" and shudder! Recently, however, the demand for eco-friendly options has introduced new types of synthetic grass to the homeowner that look convincingly real. Choose an artificial turf – mowing and watering is a thing of the past. This plantation house south of Gainesville (above) took a second look at using artificial turf between pavers for an entry patio that always looks lush and green.



### Garden Tip #3

**Try zoning plants according to water needs.** Conserving water is on everyone's mind these days. One strategy to save on water usage involves grouping plants based on drought tolerance. Plant intensively cultivated plants, like this herb garden (above), together with other flowering ornamentals that require more water. A micro-drip system can water small areas more frequently, where the lawn and outlying shrubs can be zoned to receive only occasional irrigation.

### Garden Tip #4

**Rely on the wisdom of older gardeners.** If a plant has been passed down for generations, often this plant has survived for a reason. Old fashioned gardeners did not have the luxury of irrigation systems but still managed to select plants that would thrive in their gardens despite the harsh circumstances. One of my early garden influences was Miss Hunt, a 90-year-old gardener in Newberry who shared some garden treasures that we still use today.



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