



HOW TO FERTILIZE **LIKE A FLORIDIAN**

And Follow Manatee County Law

In Florida, summer rains wash fertilizers with nitrogen and phosphorus into our lakes and oceans, damaging what makes this state so beautiful. That's why it's illegal in Manatee County to use fertilizer with nitrogen or phosphorus during the rainy season, and why slow-release is required the rest of the year.

The good news is there are lots of ways to keep your yard looking great—while keeping algae-feeding nitrogen and phosphorus out of our waterways.

DURING THE MONTHS OF

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY

- **Twice is nice.** Fertilize just twice a year, in April and October.
- **Watch the weather.** Rainstorms don't water in fertilizer, they wash it away. That wastes money and pollutes our water.
- **Skip the phosphorus.** The Tampa Bay region is naturally rich in phosphorous. Only use phosphorus-based fertilizer if a soil test turns up a deficiency.
- **Go slow by half.** Nitrogen in lawn or landscape fertilizers must be at least 50% slow-release (also called timed-release, controlled release or slowly available) from October to May. Slow release provides nourishment over a longer period, saving you money and starving the algae.

DURING THE MONTHS OF

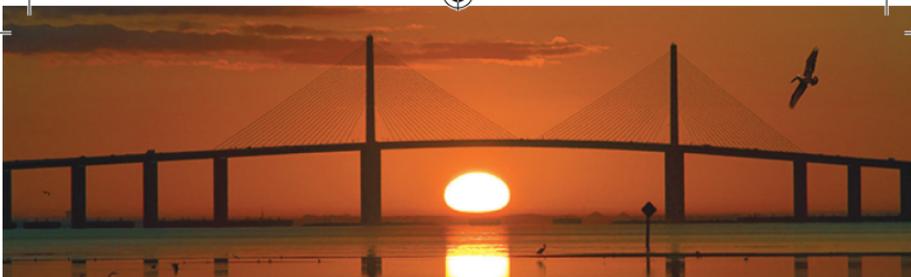
JUNE | JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER

- **Just say no to nitrogen and phosphorus.** Manatee County law bans the use of any lawn or landscape fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorous from June 1 to September 30.
- **Pump some iron.** Use Florida-friendly yard products that contain iron or other micronutrients to green up your lawn during the summer.
- **Get better dirt.** Give your garden a boost by adding compost, composted cow or chicken manure, perlite or other soil amendments.
- **Pick better plants.** Florida-friendly landscapes need less fertilizer, water and overall care—leaving you more time for fun. Visit BeFloridian.org to learn more.

Enjoy Florida. It's where you live now.

BeFloridian.org





You've mastered the art of fertilizing like a Floridian. Now you're ready to go all out. After all, our very way of life—boating, fishing, relaxing by the water while sipping drinks with little umbrellas—is at stake.

SEVEN WAYS TO STEP IT UP AND KEEP OUR WATERS FUN.

- 1 Test your turf.** Before tearing open a bag and throwing fertilizer on your yard, do a little research—or you could be throwing money away. If the problem is a pH imbalance, pest invasion, disease, or nutrient deficiency, fertilizer isn't going to make a difference. Contact the Manatee County Extension Service for help at 941-722-4524.
- 2 Perfect 10.** Keep fertilizer at least 10 feet away from any body of water.
- 3 Sweep it up.** Whisk any fertilizer granules that fall onto sidewalks, streets or driveways back into the landscaping.
- 4 On your guard.** Use a spreader with a deflector shield or edge guard so you spread fertilizer only where you need it.
- 5 Keep the clippings.** Don't throw grass clippings away—leave them right on your lawn. Clippings can supply up to 50% of the nitrogen your grass needs.
- 6 Mow high.** Mowing too short stresses the turf and makes it vulnerable to disease, pests, and drought. Typical St. Augustine grass should be mowed at 3.5 to 4 inches.
- 7 Be Floridian.** What works in New Jersey or Ohio is silly here in the semitropics. Visit BeFloridian.org to find out how you can create a Florida yard.

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