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# HOW TO

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# FERTILIZE

## LIKE A **FLORIDIAN**

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*And follow Tampa law*

Summer rains wash fertilizer into our rivers and bays, spoiling our water. That's why it's illegal in the city of Tampa to fertilize your lawn during the rainy season, and why slow-release is required the rest of the year.

### JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER

- **Skip the fertilizer.** Tampa law bans the sale or use of lawn or landscape fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorous from June 1 to September 30.
- **Pump some iron.** Use Florida-friendly yard products that contain micronutrients to green up your lawn.
- **Get better dirt.** Add compost, composted cow or chicken manure, perlite or other soil amendments.
- **Pick better plants.** Florida-friendly landscapes needs less fertilizer, water and overall care. Visit [www.BeFloridian.org](http://www.BeFloridian.org) to learn more.

### OCTOBER THROUGH 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.
- **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.
- **Choose slow-release.** Tampa law requires lawn or landscape fertilizers with nitrogen to be at least 50% slow-release (also called timed-release, controlled release or slowly available) from October 1 to May 31.

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# — SEVEN WAYS —

## TO STEP IT UP AND KEEP OUR WATERS FUN

### 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.

- 1 Test your turf.** If the problem is a pH imbalance, pest invasion, or disease, fertilizer won't help. Call the Hillsborough County Extension Service for help at 813-744-5519.
- 2 Perfect 10.** Keep fertilizer at least 10 feet away from any body of water.
- 3 Sweep it up.** Whisk fertilizer granules off sidewalks, streets and driveways. Otherwise, it's algae food.
- 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.** Leave grass clippings 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. Learn how to design your yard for where you live now at [www.BeFloridian.org](http://www.BeFloridian.org).



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