

# THE FERTILIZER FL BLACKOUT

**LMPP** Landscape  
Maintenance  
Professionals, Inc.<sup>SM</sup>

**Here's what you need to know to remain in compliance and keep your landscape healthy.**

Fertilizer is excellent for improving the quality of your landscape. Yet, when it ends up in the water supply, it's not so great for water quality. As a result, many Florida counties have implemented fertilizer bans, which prohibit the application of any fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorus between June 1 and September 30, or when the National Weather Service predicts heavy rain to occur within 24 hours.

One of the main ideas behind the ban is to keep nutrients from going past the roots of plants - where they can be absorbed - and into groundwater, the lagoon, and other waterways. While nitrogen and phosphorus are essential for plant growth, in excess, the nutrients create an overabundance of algae, which, in turn, leads to a decreased level of oxygen in the water. The blooms can also produce toxins and other harmful conditions that make it more difficult for other organisms to survive.



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An environmentally responsible lawn fertilizer program will consider the desired appearance, turf maturity, intended use, and growing conditions.

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## NUTRIENTS ALL PLANTS NEED TO SURVIVE

There are three specific nutrients that every plant needs to grow.

### Nitrogen (N)

Promotes plant growth, increases top growth, and is a building block for protein.

### Phosphorus (P)

Promotes cell division and stimulates healthy root growth and seed germination.

### Potassium (K)

Essential for photosynthesis, which protects against disease and cold.

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#### Sarasota

(941) 556-9404

Serving: Charlotte, DeSoto,  
Hardee, Manatee, Sarasota

#### Tampa

(813) 757-6500

Serving: Hillsborough,  
Pasco, Pinellas, Polk

#### Wesley Chapel

(813) 406-4465

Serving: Citrus, Hernando,  
Pasco, Pinellas

## MULCH

Mulch not only encourages better growth of plants, but it also acts as a fertilizer as it breaks down. Mulch helps the soil retain moisture and prevents the summer heat from leaching water from the soil, which can lead to soil compaction and root bound issues. Another major benefit of mulching is the suppression of weeds by preventing sunlight from reaching the soil, thereby reducing the incidence of weeds.



## SOIL TESTING

Fertilizers containing phosphorous cannot be applied to turfgrass or landscape plants at any time unless a soil analysis test showing a phosphorous deficiency has been performed by a qualified laboratory.

While regular soil testing is essential for every landscape, it's all the more crucial to ensure you catch a deficiency early on to prevent further damage to your landscape. If we suspect a phosphorous deficiency we will perform a soil test to confirm it. We will then produce the documentation required by local authorities to submit for approval for a phosphorus application.

## GREEN UP WITH MICRO-NUTRIENTS

Fertilizers containing iron, manganese, and other “micro-nutrients,” also referred to as “summer blends,” can be applied during the restricted season to keep lawns healthy and green (as recommended by Florida Yards Neighborhood/Florida Friendly Landscape Program).

Applying iron sulfate or chelated iron to your lawn instead of a complete fertilizer. They'll give you the dark green color you desire without stimulating growth. These products come in liquid and granular forms and are both easy to apply. The effect from supplemental iron application is only temporary (approximately 2–4 weeks), therefore, repeat applications are necessary for summer-long color. Of course, be sure to follow label instructions.

GOOD  
to  
KNOW



*Micronutrients*



# FERTILIZERS IN COMPLIANCE WITH FERTILIZER ORDINANCES

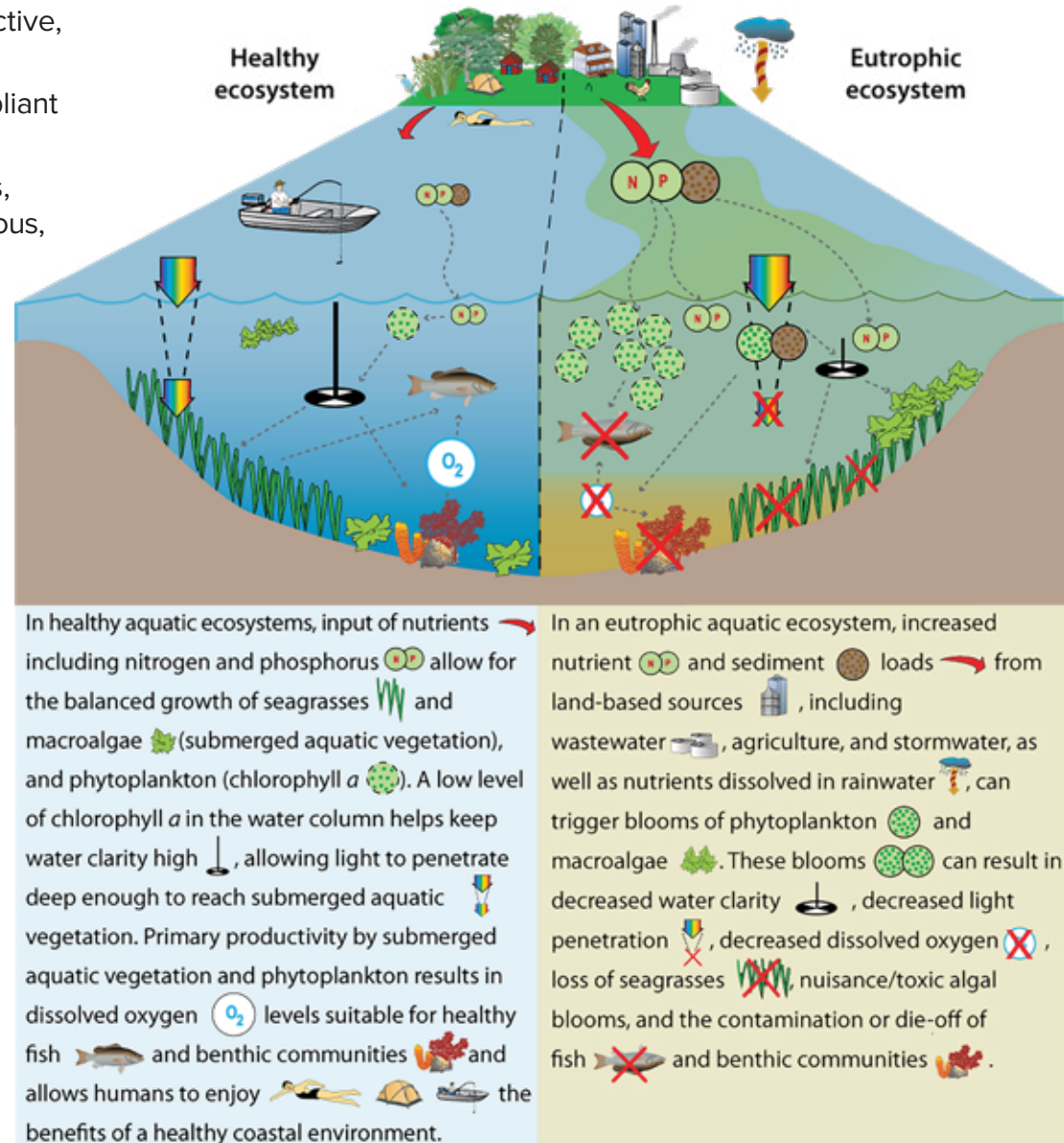
You can still fertilize with products that don't contain nitrogen or phosphorous. Fertilizer without these ingredients isn't as effective, but nutrients can still work their way down into the soil.

The fertilizer must contain no phosphorous in order to be compliant and be at least 50% slow-release nitrogen (SRN).

The fertilizer content is listed on each label has three numbers, ### which corresponds to the percentage of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium.



To follow local fertilizer ordinances at least 50% of the nitrogen (N) in the fertilizer must be slow release. To determine the nitrogen percentage, use the fertilizer label and follow the equation. Look for terms 'time-release' and 'slow-release' on fertilizer labels.



# LOCAL FERTILIZER ORDINANCES

It's important to note that within every County, cities and towns can develop stricter guidelines that may extend those months out a few weeks. Perhaps a better word to use is "ordinance." Most counties in Florida, especially those near a body of water, have a fertilizer ordinance observed between June and October.




The following pages breakdown the ordinances in effect for counties and municipalities within our range of service.

For more detailed information you can visit:

UF | IFAS Extension Florida Fertilizer Ordinances Map

<https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/fertilizer/>



-  Municipality Fertilizer Ban Ordinance
-  City Fertilizer Ban Ordinance
-  No Fertilizer Ban Ordinance



**WHAT  
STARTS  
HERE,  
CAN END  
UP HERE.**



County	Jurisdiction	ZERO TOLERANCE Restrictions	Slow Release Nitrogen	Nitrogen Limit	Phosphorus
Charlotte	Charlotte County	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 50% slow-release	<b>ZERO</b>
Charlotte	Punta Gorda	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 50% slow-release	<b>ZERO</b>
Citrus	Citrus County	Nov 1 - Mar 31	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 33% slow-release fertilizer for rest of the year	<b>ZERO</b>
Citrus	Crystal River	Nov 1 - Mar 31	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 33% slow-release fertilizer for rest of the year	<b>ZERO</b>
Hernando	Hernando County	Jan 1 - Mar 31	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Hillsborough	Hillsborough County	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 50% slow-release	<b>ZERO</b> without an approved soil test demonstrating deficiency
Hillsborough	Tampa	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 50% slow-release	<b>ZERO</b> without an approved soil test demonstrating deficiency
Hillsborough	Temple Terrace	Jan 1 - Dec 31	1) if it is raining at the application site 2) a tropical storm or hurricane warning is in effect 3) within 36 hours prior to a rain event greater than or equal to 2" in a 24 hours	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 feet per calendar year	<b>ZERO</b> ANYTIME without an approved soil test demonstrating deficiency
Manatee	Manatee County	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	Must contain at least 50% slow-release fertilizer for rest of the year	<b>ZERO</b> without an approved soil test demonstrating deficiency
Pasco	Pasco County		Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Pinellas	Pinellas County Including all 24 municipalities	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 feet per calendar year	<b>ZERO</b> without an approved soil test demonstrating deficiency
Pinellas	St. Petersburg	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 feet per calendar year	<b>ZERO</b> without an approved soil test demonstrating deficiency

County	Jurisdiction	ZERO TOLERANCE Restrictions	Slow Release Nitrogen	Nitrogen Limit	Phosphorus
Polk	Polk County		Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Sarasota	Longboat Key Incorporated Areas	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet may be applied to turf or landscape plants each year.	<b>ZERO</b>
Sarasota	North Port Incorporated Areas	June 1 - Sept 30	Turf: <b>ZERO</b> Plants: must contain at least 50% + slow release	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet may be applied to turf or landscape plants each year.	<b>ZERO</b>
Sarasota	Sarasota	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet may be applied to turf or landscape plants each year.	<b>ZERO</b>
Sarasota	Venice Incorporated Areas	June 1 - Sept 30	<b>ZERO</b>	No more than 4 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet may be applied to turf or landscape plants each year.	<b>ZERO</b>

## LANDSCAPE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Grass Clipping left on Lawn are a Great Slow-Release Fertilizer  
Reclaimed Water has N & P  
Organic Slow-Release Fertilizers support long-term Lawn Health  
If Needed, Fertilize in Spring & Fall  
Perform a Soil Test to see what your Lawn really needs  
Use FL-Friendly macro & micronutrients for Health, not Growth  
Avoid Using Weed & Feed Products  
Over-Fertilizing can cause Pest & Root problems



## HOW FERTILIZER CAN CAUSES ALGAE BLOOMS

Fertilizer makes plants grow; algae are plants  
Algae can bloom Immediately - 24/7 for extended Periods  
Quick-Lived, Algae settles out & cause Bacteria Blooms  
Bacteria Blooms Consume Oxygen in the Water, creating Dead Zones  
Dead Algae & Bacteria release more Nutrients - the Process Continues