



1. **Use a low-phosphorous, slow-release fertilizer.**
 - We recommend a fertilizer with 50% or more of the nitrogen (N) in a slow- or controlled-release form with little or no phosphorous (P).
 - Consider using an organic fertilizer, such as Espoma, Jungle Growth or GreenEdge. Most of the nitrogen in organic fertilizer is typically slow-release and less likely to leach. Organic fertilizers also add organic matter to the soil, helping to retain moisture and nutrients.
2. **Less is best.**
 - When using a fertilizer with 50% or higher slow-release nitrogen (N), you can apply up to 1 lb. of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 square feet per application. Do not apply more than .5 lbs of **soluble** N/ 1,000 sq. ft.
 - We suggest the University of Florida IFAS Extension's basic, low-maintenance recommendation for St. Augustine and zoysia grass, fertilizing twice a year during the growing season (March and September). See Resources below for a link to UF IFAS Extension fertilization recommendations.
 - A soil and turfgrass tissue analysis is recommended to determine your lawn's fertilization requirements.
 - You can green your lawn during the summer by applying Iron (Fe) in the month of June.
 - Consider planting groundcovers and grasses, like Bahia, that require very little or no fertilizer each year.
 - Applying too much fertilizer or applying during the summer months can encourage disease and insect problems and may increase chance of leaching or runoff into our waterways.
 - Never apply before approaching heavy storms or during flood or storm watches.
3. **Establish a fertilizer/pesticide-free zone** next to waterways and impervious surfaces.
 - Don't apply fertilizers or chemicals within 10 ft. of waterways or directly adjacent to impervious surfaces.
 - If using a broadcast spreader, use a deflector shield to better control the application of fertilizer.
4. **Avoid fertilizers containing weed killers or pesticides.**
 - Spot treat affected areas for weeds and insects and use nontoxic alternatives, when possible.
 - Pull weeds by hand, and you can avoid the need for chemicals altogether.
 - Most herbicides and pesticides are toxic to aquatic organisms and many are known carcinogens.
5. **Create or expand beds with native or low-maintenance plants.**
 - Beds along waterways and impervious surfaces can serve as buffers by preventing and filtering runoff.
 - Right plant, right place: Select plants that match a site's soil, light, water, and climatic conditions. Native plants are a good choice because they are adapted to the local climate and soil types, provide important habitat for wildlife, and will require much less fertilizer, pesticide, and irrigation to thrive.
 - Avoid and remove invasive plants, like Mexican Petuna, that can spread and disrupt natural habitats.
6. **Use a 2-3" layer of organic mulch, such as pine straw, pine bark, wood chips, or leaves.**
 - Do not use cypress mulch. Harvesting cypress destroys living trees and important wildlife habitat.
 - Mulch helps to retain moisture for the plants, prevent weeds, and slow runoff.
7. **Mow high, keep blades sharp, and use a mulching mower.**
 - Frequently sharpen blade and cut off no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade for a healthier lawn.
 - Grass clippings left on the lawn add nutrients to the soil as they decompose.
8. **Let only rain down the storm drain and reduce stormwater runoff.**
 - Storm drains ultimately lead to the river and waterways.
 - Do not blow or sweep leaves, grass, and debris into the street or storm drains and keep chemicals and fertilizers away from impervious surfaces (roads, driveways, sidewalks).
 - Reduce stormwater runoff by using berms, swales, and rain gardens and permeable materials for walkways, driveways, etc.. Direct downspouts toward yard/garden, away from driveways and sidewalks.

9. **Water efficiency.**

- Apply $\frac{3}{4}$ " or less no more than once a week (Standard Time: November – March) and $\frac{1}{2}$ " or less no more than twice a week (Daylight Savings Time: March - November).
- Only water before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m., and only if needed.
- Carefully keep track of weather patterns and forecasts and adjust your watering schedule and automatic timers accordingly. You can often rely almost exclusively on rainfall, especially if you landscape with drought-tolerant plants.
- Water early in morning to minimize evaporation when wind speeds and temperatures are at their lowest.

10. **Install rain shutoff switch or soil moisture sensor.**

- Rain shutoff devices are required by law on all automatic irrigation systems installed since 1991.
- Soil moisture sensors (SMS) monitor moisture levels at the root zone and override your irrigation system timer when your lawn has received the appropriate amount of water. Install at least one SMS in the driest irrigation zone in your yard.

11. **Regularly inspect, repair, and calibrate irrigation system.**

- Replace broken spray heads and use appropriate type of spray heads for various irrigation needs.
- Make sure that sprinklers are not watering sidewalks and driveways or roads.
- Use the most efficient strategies and type of irrigation components to meet the needs of the plants.

12. **Make sure your lawn care company employees are trained in and follow the "Florida Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries."** For more information, see Resources below.

13. **Ask your lawn care company if they offer an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program.**

- IPM programs can help reduce the amount of toxic chemicals that you are applying to your lawn.
- See "Integrated Pest Management" link below for more information.

14. **Comply with all local fertilizer, irrigation, or landscaping ordinances.**

RESOURCES:

St. Johns Riverkeeper River Friendly Recommendations

www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org/river-friendly

General Recommendations for Fertilization of Turfgrasses on Florida Soils, UF IFAS Extension

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh014>

Florida Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries

http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/GIBMP_Manual_WEB_2_17_11.pdf

The Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) Homeowner Program

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowner.htm>

Florida-Friendly Landscaping

www.floridayards.org

Florida Native Plant Society

www.fnps.org

Waterwise Landscaping (includes searchable plant database)

www.sjrwm.com/waterwiselandscapes

Florida Invasive Plant Mobile Field Guide

www.plantatlas.usf.edu/flip

Integrated Pest Management

<http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu>

National Pesticide Information Center

<http://npic.orst.edu> or 1-800-858-7378

Beyond Pesticides

www.beyondpesticides.org