

Landscape and Fertilizer Tips for Homeowners and Those Who Hire Lawn Services

Here are tips to protect water resources:

Fertilizer

- Do not apply fertilizer before a heavy rain.
- Use a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer product.
- Always read and follow instructions on the fertilizer bag.
- Apply no more than the maximum amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus.
- Only fertilize twice per year, only during the growing season.
- Use a deflector shield on all broadcast fertilizer spreaders.
- Keep fertilizers and pesticides off sidewalks and driveways and out of water bodies.

Protect the waterfront

- Fertilizers should not be applied by either professional applicators or homeowners within 10 feet of a water body (such as a bay, lake, stream, canal, wetland or pond) unless a deflector shield is used. With a deflector shield, fertilizer may be applied within three feet of a water body.
- Waterfront property owners should establish a six-foot low maintenance or “no mow” zone adjacent to water bodies to reduce the potential for fertilizer residues entering bodies of water.

Mowing

- Mow your grass regularly and at the highest recommended height so that clippings and their nutrients can be recycled.
- Keep lawn mower blades sharp.

Cleanup

- Leave short lawn clippings on the lawn. They provide nutrients to your lawn and result in a 20–30 percent reduction in fertilizer use.
- Keep grass clippings, vegetative material and vegetative debris away from storm drains, ditches, conveyances, water bodies and roadways.
- Never hose down chemical spills. Keep absorbent materials such as “kitty litter” onsite for spill cleanup.

Plants

- Select landscape plants that are well adapted to your site and have low water requirements.
- Treat specific weedy areas rather than resorting to general “weed and feed” mixtures.

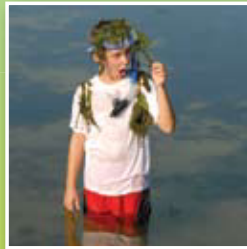
For more information on how to protect water resources, visit [WaterMatters.org/yards](https://www.watarmatters.org/yards)

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Maintaining an attractive landscape is important. Some residents choose to maintain their own lawns while others hire a lawn maintenance service. Whether you care for your landscape or hire a company to maintain your yard, it's important to follow these recommended tips to protect the water resources.

Everything you (or your landscape companies) put on your landscape can run off into a water body when it rains. Pollutants such as fertilizer, pesticides and grass clippings wash directly into water bodies, eventually leading to poor water quality, fish kills and green, murky water. By following the tips on the front side of this card yourself or by talking about them to landscape professionals you hire, you can do your part to ensure pollutants stay out of nearby water bodies and protect the water resources for generations to come.

Southwest Florida
Water Management District



Southwest Florida
Water Management District
2379 Broad Street
Brooksville, FL 34604-6899

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