

## For Lawn Care Professionals



## Need More Information?



*The Fertilizer Rain Delay campaign reminds professional fertilizer applicators and homeowners not to apply fertilizer ahead of forecasted heavy rain (1 inch or more of rain in 24 hours).*

Green industry professionals play an important role in protecting our water quality and maintaining our landscapes.

In Leon County and the City of Tallahassee, all industry professionals that apply fertilizer for hire must successfully complete a UF/IFAS Extension Green-Industry Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) course and hold a Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (FDACS) Limited Urban Fertilizer (LUF) license. This includes all governmental and institutional employees who apply fertilizers as part of their job.

### Contact UF/IFAS Extension Leon County

615 Paul Russel Rd.

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: (850) 606-5200

<http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/leon/>

### Contact the Leon County Department of Development Support and Environmental Management

435 N. Macomb St.

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Phone: (850) 606-1300

[www.LeonCountyFL.gov/DSEM](http://www.LeonCountyFL.gov/DSEM)



# Fertilizer Use, Best Practices and Guidance

## For Homeowners and Professionals

## Save Your Money, Plants, and the Environment by Fertilizing Properly

Fertilizers can be an important tool to maintaining a beautiful, healthy landscape. Unfortunately, inappropriate use of fertilizers can lead to the degradation of local water bodies. Too much fertilizer can also reduce the health of your plants, either through fertilizer burn or additional pests and diseases.



## Fertilizer Best Practices



- **Only fertilize if necessary.** Not all landscape plants need frequent fertilization. Information on fertilizer needs and soil test kits are available from the UF/IFAS Leon County Extension Office.
- **Use the right amount.** Always follow the fertilizer label and/or UF/IFAS soil test recommendations.
- **Apply at the right time.** In North Florida, turf and warm-season perennials should be fertilized April -September. This guide also includes important fertilizer prohibition periods.

## Fertilizer Prohibition Periods



Timing your fertilizer application is important for the health of your plants and the environment. Leon County Residents should avoid fertilizing during these conditions:

- At least one day before heavy rain (over 1 inch of rain in 24 hours) as required by ordinance
- During warning periods for significant weather events like hurricanes and tropical storms
- Before seeding or sodding a site and for the first 30 days after seeding or sodding
- During the winter months (defined as periods when the temperature drops below 40 degrees, usually November through February)

It's also important to maintain a 15-foot fertilizer-free zone around water bodies and wetlands.



## Hiring a Lawn Care Company or Landscaping Professional?



Homeowners hiring landscape professionals to maintain their lawn and landscape should verify that the landscaper has obtained the Green Industries – Best Management Practice/ Limited Urban Fertilizer Applicator certification.

GI-BMP certified professionals have been trained to apply fertilizer in accordance with local ordinances and in the safest and most effective manner.

Find a GI-BMP certified professional here:  
<https://gibmp-prod.ifas.ufl.edu/certified>



## More Fertilizer Application Resources for Homeowners



- Your Florida Lawn webpage: <https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/yourfloridalawn/>
- Homeowner best practices for the Florida lawn (includes recommended application rates): <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP236>