

Fertilize and Things to Avoid

Fertilize Carefully • Unwise or excessive use of chemicals can harm people, pets, beneficial organisms and the environment. Use nontoxic alternatives whenever possible and pull weeds by hand. • Avoid overuse of fertilizers, especially near the water's edge. Rain and lawn watering can wash excess fertilizer into ponds and water bodies, where excess nutrients cause algal blooms (green pond scum) and undesirable weed growth. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences recommends using a complete, slow-release fertilizer in March and September. This can result in less mowing, less thatch buildup, less watering, fewer nutrients washing into ponds and waterways, and fewer insect and disease problems. • Use pond water to irrigate your lawn. It not only saves drinking water supplies, but also recycles nutrients so that you can fertilize less frequently. You save on both your water and your fertilizer bills. • Use only aquatic herbicides in maintaining stormwater ponds. Land based herbicides contain nutrients that are harmful to water bodies.

Things to Avoid • Depositing lawn clippings in water bodies and storm drains can increase oxygen demand in the water, which can significantly harm fish populations. Use your lawn clippings for mulch or compost. • Stormwater ponds are treatment systems that trap pollutants from the neighborhood watershed. Stormwater systems are designed and constructed to an appropriate size. Any reduction in treatment volume will interfere with the pond's ability to hold stormwater runoff. Filling stormwater ponds, swales and retention systems can cause flooding and endanger waterways. • Changing the elevation of large pieces of property can have drastic impacts on where storm water flows. Consult the stipulations of your neighborhood's permit before any construction. • Storm drains are direct conduits to your stormwater pond or natural waterway. Avoid dumping waste oil, chemicals or yard trash into ponds, inlets or storm drains. Contact your local government's waste management department for a list of disposal facilities.