

- **If you spill fertilizer on the lawn, collect whatever you can.** It might be tempting to just water extra fertilizer into the lawn, but the excess nutrients will leach (seep downwards) through the soil and into the groundwater.



Sweep up fertilizer spills on the lawn.

- **Never fertilize within 10 feet of any water body.** Designate a 10-foot maintenance-free zone between your landscape and the riparian zone.



Never apply fertilizer within 10 feet of any water body.

- **Don't fertilize before a heavy rain.** If rain is forecast in the next twenty-four hours, hold off on applying fertilizer. Rain can wash fertilizer off lawns or cause it to leach into groundwater, contributing to pollution.
- **Know your water source.** If you use reclaimed/recycled water for irrigation, keep in mind that it can contain

nutrients, including nitrogen, and adjust the amount you fertilize accordingly.

FOR LAWNS

- **Apply fertilizer only when grass is actively growing.** Many Florida turfgrasses go dormant or slow their growth in cooler seasons. Water it in with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of water or less.
- **Use a broadcast spreader with a deflector shield.** Don't use a drop spreader, which can damage the coatings on slow-release fertilizers, rendering them quick-release.



A deflector shield directs fertilizer away from your maintenance-free zone.

- **Avoid using "weed and feed" products.** These contain herbicides and fertilizer together.
 - These products can injure some trees and shrubs. Tree and shrub root systems can extend far beyond the canopy drip line, intermingling with turf.
 - Pesticides should be applied only to affected areas, rather than broadcast over the entire yard as occurs with a weed and feed product.
 - The appropriate timing is often different, with pre-emergent herbicides applied far earlier than fertilizer. This almost ensures that one or the other is ineffective, if not harmful.
- **Apply an iron source instead of a nitrogen fertilizer.** To green the lawn without increasing growth in the summer, use chelated iron or iron sulfate.

SELECTING A FERTILIZER

A wide range of fertilizers is available for gardeners. You can select from different combinations of nutrients that come in a variety of forms. The key to selecting a fertilizer is understanding what nutrients your plants need.

INORGANIC FERTILIZERS

Inorganic fertilizers are materials that are mined or synthesized from non-living materials. Many inorganic fertilizers contain nutrients that are immediately available to plants. Others are formulated to allow nutrients to be released