

Do It Yourself Residential Fertilizing Guide

As part of an important effort to stop pollution in our own backyards, the City of Port St. Lucie Fertilizer Ordinance calls for anyone applying fertilizer within the City of Port St. Lucie to follow the City's environmentally friendly fertilizing rules. This page will focus on how all residents can accomplish this without endangering the health of their lawn or landscape.

By carefully following the four steps outlined below, you can be confident that you've made wise fertilizer choices that will help to protect our waters. If you use a professional landscape maintenance service, ask to see their Limited Fertilizer Applicator Certificate (License). To find out if the professional service you use is properly licensed, view the current alphabetized list of County certified landscapers/applicators at http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/professionals/certification_lists/cert_county_name.shtml

Step 1: Determine your fertilizer needs

What is Fertilizer?

All plants require certain chemical elements, or nutrients, for proper growth and appearance. Fertilizers may be used to make up for nutrients lacking in the soil.

Read the Fertilizer Label

The three identifying numbers on a fertilizer label indicate the percentage of the three primary nutrients by weight. **N-P-K**

N	P	K
Nitrogen	Phosphorus	Potassium/Potash
Essential for growth and reproduction	Important for establishment	Increases drought and stress tolerance

To comply with the City of Port St. Lucie Fertilizer Ordinance, choose a fertilizer that contains at least 50% Slow Release Nitrogen and Zero Phosphorous.

Fertilizers may also contain secondary nutrients such as calcium, sulfur, and magnesium and micronutrients including iron, manganese, boron, copper, molybdenum, nickel, chlorine, and zinc. These products may be applied, as necessary, anywhere on your landscape throughout the year. For example, applying iron in the summer can be an effective way to "green-up" your lawn without encouraging unwanted growth.

Phosphorous (P) and Soil Testing

Most St. Lucie County soils contain naturally high levels of phosphorus, so "zero-phosphorus" fertilizers are the rule in St. Lucie County unless a state-certified laboratory soil test confirms a deficiency in the soil underlying the turf or landscape plant in question. Contact any local UF-IFAS Extension office to obtain information on soil testing kits. Contact information for any county extension office can be found at www.solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/

Step 2: Choose an Appropriate Fertilizer

Calculate the Percentage of Slow Release Nitrogen

Nitrogen in fertilizers may come from a single source or a combination of sources. Some nitrogen sources are "quick release" and other sources are "slow release". According to the University of Florida, fertilizers with slow release nitrogen are more likely to be used by plants and less likely to leach into groundwater or wash away in runoff.

In the City of Port St. Lucie, fertilizers must contain;

At least 50% Slow Release Nitrogen (SRN).

A product with 50% slow release nitrogen means that 50% of the nitrogen is available immediately and 50% will be slowly released over a period of time.

No Phosphorus – Fertilizer applied to any turf or landscape must contain "zero phosphorus (phosphate)". Unless a state-certified laboratory soil test confirms a deficiency in the soil underlying the turf or landscape plant in question.

Important Information


Check bags you purchase by using the graphic shown here. The City of Port St. Lucie cannot regulate the sales of fertilizer during the blackout time, or ensure that the contents meet the requirements of the fertilizer ordinance. Be mindful that it is the consumer's responsibility to comply with the fertilizer ordinance regulations. Violation of the fertilizer ordinance can result in monetary fines.

You can dispose of old fertilizers and other chemicals at the City of Port St. Lucie Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days or at the St Lucie County Recycling and Bailing Facility at 6120 Glades Cutoff Road 772-462-1768

What To Look For On Your Fertilizer Label

% of Total N as Slow-Release Nitrogen (SRN) = $\frac{10.5}{14} \times 100 = 75\%$

This product will meet the requirements of at least 50% SRN and Zero Phosphorus (Middle Number) as per City of Port St Lucie Code



GUARANTEED ANALYSIS	
TOTAL NITROGEN (N).....	14.00 %
14.0% Urea Nitrogen (N)*	
SOLUBLE POTASH (K ₂ O).....	26.00 %
SULFUR (S) Total.....	19.70 %
10.50% Free sulfur (S)	
9.20% Combined sulfur (S)	
IRON (Fe) Total.....	0.96 %
0.19% Water Soluble Iron (Fe)	
MANGANESE (Mn) Total.....	0.48 %
0.1% Water Soluble Manganese (Mn)	
DERIVED FROM: Polymer Coated Sulfur Coated Urea, Sulfate of Potash, Iron Oxide, Manganese Oxide.	
CHLORINE (Cl) Max.....	2.00%
*10.5% Slowly Available Urea Nitrogen from Polymer Coated Sulfur Coated Urea.	

Step 3: Determine How Much to Apply

When making your plan to fertilize, please remember the following regulations:

- Fertilizer may be applied at a maximum rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet (1 lb N/1000 square feet) per application.
- 2-4 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet can be applied to any Bahia turf per year. What this means is if you apply the maximum of 1 lb per application, you can fertilize 2-4 times in a year and not exceed the yearly limit.
- 4-6 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet can be applied to any St Augustine turf per year. What this means is if you apply the maximum of 1 lb per application, you can fertilize 4-6 times in a year and not exceed the yearly limit.

Determine the Area (Square Footage) of Your Lawn or Landscape

To determine the square footage to be fertilized, multiply the length in feet by the width in feet, to get square footage. Example if your lawn is 75 feet long x 40 feet wide = 3000 square feet

Calculate the Proper Amount of Fertilizer to Apply

To calculate the amount of fertilizer needed to deliver one pound of nitrogen to a 1000 square foot area (1 lb N/1000 sq.ft.), divide the number 100 by the percentage of total nitrogen (first number on the bag).

$$100 \div N = \text{pounds of fertilizer to apply to achieve 1 lb/1000 square feet}$$

If using a 14-0-26 bag of fertilizer, then $100 \div 14 = 7.14$ lbs of this fertilizer will get you 1 lb of nitrogen per 1000 square feet.

Fertilizer calculator

Use this calculator to determine the amount of fertilizer to use:

Length (ft.)

Width (ft.)

Total Square Feet

Total Nitrogen in bag (First number on label)

Fertilizer to achieve 1 Lb. of Nitrogen/1000 Sq. Ft.

Lbs. of fertilizer to apply to your lawn

Go to our handy online calculator to determine how much fertilizer to apply

If your lawn is 3000 square feet, multiply that 7.14 lbs calculated above by 3; use ~ 21 lbs of this fertilizer on your lawn.

Step 4: Apply Appropriately

Applying appropriately means applying the right amount of fertilizer at the right time in the right place. Nowhere is this more important than in the State of Florida where activities on land can have immediate impacts on local waters.

Nitrogen

Fertilizer must contain at least 50% Slow Release Nitrogen.

“Zero” Phosphorus

Fertilizer must contain “Zero Phosphorus” unless a state certified soil test verifies that there is a phosphorus deficiency.

Fertilizer Blackout Periods

Fertilizers containing Nitrogen or Phosphorus cannot be applied during the following times:

June 1 – September 30, Black out period

Hurricane warning or watch

Tropical storm warning or watch

Flood warning or watch

Heavy rains or 2 inches or more are expected

Buffer Zones

The City of Port St. Lucie is known for its exceptional aquatic wildlife. Extreme caution is vital when fertilizing near any body of water. Fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorus cannot be applied within 10 feet of any of these highly sensitive areas: ponds, streams, water courses, lakes, canals, retention areas, drains and drainage ditches and wetlands.

Impervious Surfaces

Fertilizer should never be applied to impervious (hard) surfaces such as streets, sidewalks, and driveways. Accidental spills should be swept up immediately.

Use the Spreader Safely

Before you begin, be sure that both the spreader and fertilizer are dry and that the spreader is on a hard surface (easy to sweep up an accidental spill). While wearing gloves and safety glasses, close the broadcaster vent and fill the hopper slowly, keeping fertilizer away from eyes and skin. Sweep up any spilled fertilizer immediately and return to the package.

Use a Deflector Shield

The Ordinance requires that you use a deflector shield when applying fertilizer. The shield needs to be positioned to deflect fertilizer granules away from impervious (hard) surfaces, bodies of water and storm drains. Many fertilizer bags have spreader settings printed on the label. However, these settings should only be used when the recommended rate of application is 1 lb N/1000 sq.ft. or less. If the recommended rate of application is greater than 1 lb N/1000 sq.ft. or if the fertilizer label does not list spreader settings, set the spreader on the smallest setting, add the appropriate amount of fertilizer (see Step 3) and go over the area in a north/south direction. When you have covered the area to which you are applying the product, or when you have half of the fertilizer left in the hopper, turn and cover in an east/west orientation until you run out of fertilizer