

Restricted Season

Check local codes to learn when applying nitrogen- and/or phosphorous-containing fertilizers to lawns is prohibited (e.g., June through September).

Nitrogen

Nitrogen fertilizer must contain at least 50 percent slow-release nitrogen. Applications of nitrogen shall not exceed 1 pound per 1,000 square feet at each application, nor exceed a total of 4 pounds per 1,000 square feet each year.

Phosphorus

Applications of phosphorus shall not exceed 0.25 pounds per 1,000 square feet at each application, nor exceed a total of 0.5 pounds per 1,000 square feet each year.

Fertilizer-Free Zone

No fertilizer may be applied to impervious/non-porous surfaces, and any spillage must be removed (consider storing and reusing). Fertilizer-free zones are also required around water bodies and wetlands, though specifics vary by locality.

Fertilizer Applicators

All commercial and institutional applicators of fertilizer must receive Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) training and certification. Private homeowners are required to follow local codes, and are encouraged to comply with the UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program.

Grass Clippings

Keep grass clippings, vegetative material and other debris out of stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, water bodies and roadways.

Green Industry Best Management Practices Training

Florida law requires that all commercial fertilizer applicators must have a license from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. To obtain this license, each “green industry” worker must be trained in Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) and receive a certificate of completion from the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Visit gibmp.ifas.ufl.edu/classes to find local training opportunities.

More Information

UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County

sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota
311 (or 941-861-5000)

Sarasota County - Ord. No. 2007-053,
2007-062, www.scgov.net

City of Venice - Ord. No. 2009-07,
www.venicegov.com

City of Sarasota - Ord. No. 2007-4768,
www.sarasotafl.gov

Town of Longboat Key - Ord. No. 2008-04,
2008-07, www.longboatkey.org

City of North Port - Ord. No. 2007-45,
2023-14, www.northportfl.gov

SARASOTA COUNTY'S Fertilizer & Landscape MANAGEMENT CODES

*Including City of Sarasota, City of Venice,
Town of Longboat Key, and City of North Port*

UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County

UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County

Twin Lakes Park, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota 34241

311 (or 941-861-5000 outside Sarasota County) | sarasota@ifas.ufl.edu | sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota

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Sarasota County

Fertilizer & Landscape Management Code Summary/Comparison

CODE HIGHLIGHTS	SARASOTA COUNTY (unincorporated areas), CITY OF SARASOTA, CITY OF VENICE	TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY	CITY OF NORTH PORT
Restricted Season	From June 1 through Sept. 30, no fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall be applied to turf or landscape plants in residential areas.	From June 1 through Sept. 30, no fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall be applied to turf or landscape plants in residential areas.	From April 1 through Sept. 30, no fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall be applied to turf or landscape plants in residential areas.
Nitrogen Applications	Nitrogen fertilizer must contain at least 50 percent slowly available or slow-release nitrogen (SRN). Shall not exceed 1 pound per 1,000 square feet at each application to turf or landscape plants, nor exceed 4 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.	Nitrogen fertilizer must contain at least 50 percent slowly available or slow-release nitrogen (SRN). Shall not exceed 1 pound per 1,000 square feet at each application to turf or landscape plants, nor exceed 4 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.	Nitrogen fertilizer must contain at least 50 percent slowly available or slow-release nitrogen (SRN). Shall not exceed 1 pound per 1,000 square feet at each application to turf or landscape plants, nor exceed 4 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
Phosphorus Applications	Shall not exceed 0.25 pounds per 1,000 square feet at each application, and shall not exceed a total of 0.5 pounds per 1,000 square feet per year.	Shall not exceed 0.25 pounds per 1,000 square feet at each application, and shall not exceed a total of 0.5 pounds per 1,000 square feet per year.	Shall not exceed 0.25 pounds per 1,000 square feet at each application, and shall not exceed a total of 0.5 pounds per 1,000 square feet per year.
Fertilizer-Free Zone	No fertilizer may be applied to impervious (non-porous) surfaces, and any spillage must be removed. Fertilizer may not be applied within 10 feet of any water body or wetland. Plants may be fertilized in this zone only for the first 60-day establishment period.	Fertilizer shall not be applied within 3 feet — or within 10 feet if applied by a broadcast spreader without deflector — of any pond, stormwater drain, ditch, conveyance, canal, water body, top of seawall, or wetland. Plants may be fertilized in this zone only for the first 60-day establishment period.	Do not spill fertilizer onto impervious surfaces. Do not apply fertilizer within 10 feet of a pond, stream, canal, or top of a seawall. If the distance between the edge of the water and the top of the bank is more than 10 feet, do not apply fertilizer beyond the top of the bank. Do not apply fertilizer within a wetland, within the 25-foot buffer line of a wetland, or within the flow channel of any swales. Plants may be fertilized in this zone only for the first 60-day establishment period.
Low-Maintenance Zone	A 6-foot, low-maintenance zone of landscape plants appropriate to preventing fertilizer runoff is recommended for any water body or wetland.	A low-maintenance zone around water bodies is recommended.	A voluntary, 6-foot, vegetated, low-maintenance zone is recommended to extend landward from the edge of a water body to reduce fertilizer runoff and increase nutrient uptake by the plants.
Deflector Shields	A deflector shield is required on all broadcast (rotary) spreaders to prevent fertilizer from being applied to impervious surfaces or within 10 feet of any water body or wetland.	A deflector shield is required on all broadcast (rotary) spreaders to prevent fertilizer from being applied within 3 feet of any water body or wetland.	A deflector shield is required on all broadcast (rotary) spreaders to prevent fertilizer from being applied within 10 feet of any water body or wetland.
Grass Clippings	No grass clippings, vegetative material, or vegetative debris may be washed, swept, blown, or otherwise deposited in stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, water bodies, wetlands, or sidewalks or roadways.	No grass clippings, vegetative material, or vegetative debris may be washed, swept, blown, or otherwise deposited in stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, water bodies, wetlands, or sidewalks or roadways.	No grass clippings or vegetative material may be washed, swept, blown or otherwise deposited in water bodies or roadways.
Commercial and Institutional Applicators	All fertilizer applicators (except homeowners on their own property) must receive training and certifications in Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP).	All fertilizer applicators (except homeowners on their own property) must receive training and certifications in Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP).	All fertilizer applicators (except homeowners on their own property) must receive training and certifications in Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP).
Enforcement	Enforcement actions will take place through the use of county code enforcement procedures or civil penalties.	Enforcement actions will take place through the use of town code enforcement procedures or civil penalties.	Enforcement actions are stipulated in ordinances 2007-45 and 2023-14 of the city code, with fines of up to \$500 per offense.

This brochure is intended as an educational introduction to fertilizer and landscape management codes throughout Sarasota County municipal and unincorporated areas. All fertilizer applicators, including private residents and professional landscapers, maintain responsibility for understanding and abiding by applicable codes. Find information about local codes at ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/fertilizer/ or... scan

Learn more about Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ at sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota.

