

Protect Florida's Water

Pollution washed into water bodies by rain or irrigation water is known as *Pointless Personal Pollution* and is the result of common daily activities.

Examples of these pollutants include:

- ♦ Sand and soil from erosion
- ♦ Oil and grease from automobiles
- ♦ Pesticides, fertilizers and weed killers
- ♦ Litter, yard clippings, pet and livestock wastes
- ♦ Bacteria and excessive nutrients leaking from septic tanks



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Cover Photo Courtesy of Washington State Dept. of Ecology, King County and the Cities of Bellevue, Tacoma & Seattle

Fertilizer Facts



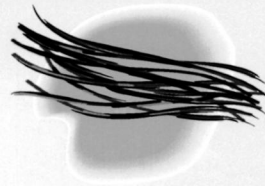
Are You
Fertilizing the
St. Lucie River?

Fertilizers and Plants

♦ Fertilizers are plant food supplements, like human vitamins. Plants make their own food using carbon dioxide, water and sunlight. Too much fertilizer is actually harmful to plants just like an overdose of vitamins would be harmful to humans.

♦ Over fertilizing can create pest problems, stimulate excessive plant growth and requires frequent watering. Excess fertilizer can seep through the soil and contaminate the groundwater, which increases the cost of treating our drinking water.

♦ Excess fertilizer in surface water runoff contaminates the St. Lucie River and creates harmful algae blooms that can kill fish.



Fertilizer 101

♦ The numbers on a fertilizer bag refer to percentages by weight of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (example: 16-2-8). Nitrogen and phosphorus cause the most problems with regard to water pollution.

♦ A 50-pound bag of 16-2-8 contains 16% nitrogen, 2% phosphorus and 8% potassium.

♦ Different types of plants benefit from different types of fertilizer. Read the label on the bag before purchase to ensure you are choosing the correct fertilizer for your lawn or garden.

♦ Follow label directions and apply only the recommended amount. Remember, an overdose of fertilizer, like an overdose of vitamins, is not healthy for plants or the environment.

Fertilizing Tips

The proper use of fertilizers can help prevent contamination of our surface water and groundwater.

♦ Choose a slow-release fertilizer, or one that has a high percentage of slow-release, that will lessen the chance of contaminating surface and groundwater.

♦ Keep fertilizers away from driveways, streets and storm drains. Sweep up any overspread fertilizer and place it back on your lawn or garden.

♦ Use a minimum amount of water when watering in newly applied fertilizer.

♦ Do not apply fertilizers if heavy rain is forecasted the day you plan to apply it.

