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### Best Management Practices

This brochure provides general information and guidance on turf grass and landscape management practices, to minimize Non-point Source Pollution in order to conserve and protect Florida's water resources. This brochure is designed to be an educational guide for professional service providers and those who hire professional lawn care services. This document is intended to enhance the professional knowledge and judgment of turf grass and landscape workers.

More information on Stormwater Management, Low Impact Development, and Florida Friendly Landscape Maintenance Practices is available from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, water management districts, universities, and professional associations.

The protection of water resources is enhanced through turf and landscape care practices that make the best use of technology and the practical experience of professionals. These practices address specific concerns, including the protection of water resources where pesticides and nutrients enter ground water and surface water as a result of nonpoint source pollution.

University studies throughout the country, including Florida, have shown that properly managed turf grass and landscapes do not significantly contribute to nonpoint source pollution. Pollution occurs when less than adequate management techniques are used. Developing low-risk irrigation, fertilizer, and pesticide programs, and ensuring that these programs are properly administered and periodically reviewed, reduces the possibility of nutrient movement off-site.

Whenever possible, professional should educate their clients on landscape best management practices (BMPs) that encourage water conservation and pollution prevention. The goals of the BMPs are to reduce non-point source pollution and promote the efficient use of water, as follows:

- *Reduce the off-site transport of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides through surface water or ground water.*
- *Use appropriate site design and plant selection.*
- *Use appropriate rates and methods of applying fertilizer and irrigation.*
- *Use integrated pest management (IPM) to minimize pests and apply chemicals only when appropriate.*

BMPs should integrate selection, irrigation, fertilization, and pest management in a manner that minimizes environmental impacts, yet meets clients and customers' expectations. Irrigation practices influence how often we need to fertilize and this can affect the occurrence of pest infestations.



This brochure was developed using information from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.  
Download the entire booklet – 'Florida Friendly Best Management Practices'

from the following website:

[www.dep.state.fl.us/water/nonpoint](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/nonpoint)

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City of Clermont  
Environmental Services  
Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Best Management Practices  
for Landscapers  
and Homeowners who  
Hire Landscapers



To preserve and enhance the quality of life for the Clermont community by providing exceptional services

## Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Landscapers

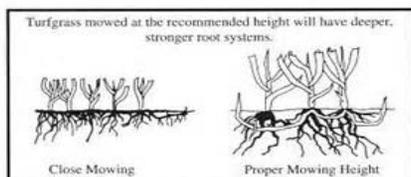
### Mowing

Mowing is an important maintenance operation, at the correct height, increases turf density, root health and suppresses weeds. A dense turf reduces the amount of stormwater runoff, but a healthy root system ensures that water and nutrients are absorbed and not wasted.

### Mowing Tips and BMPs

- Clippings contain nutrients and should be recycled on the lawn since they decompose quickly. If blown into the street or gutter, the clippings end up in the stormwater system and pollute our water bodies. Putting them back on the lawn returns fertilizer and organic matter to the soil.
- Remove clippings from sidewalks, driveways and other impervious areas by blowing back onto the turf or compost them.
- Mow at the recommended height for your grass. Mow often enough so that no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade is removed. Suggested mowing guidelines are listed below:

Grass Type	Optimal Mow Ht. (inches)	Mowing Frequency (days)
Bahia	3.0-4.0	7-17
Bermuda	0.5-1.5	3-5
Centipede	1.0-2.0	10-14
St. Augustine	3.0-4.0	5-14
Zoysia	1.0-3.0	10-14



### Fertilizing

Fertilization is one of the key management practices in establishing and maintaining healthy, actively growing turf grass. Excessive irrigation may cause leaching or runoff.

### Fertilizer Tips and BMPs

- Use a slow-release fertilizer with low or no phosphorus (have a soil test prior to application of phosphorus). Read and understand the fertilizer label.
- Do not fertilize when a heavy rain is expected.
- Only fertilize twice per year and only during the growing season.
- Reclaimed water is high in nutrients. Do not add phosphorus to a site irrigated with reclaimed water.
- Healthy, properly maintained grass produces less stormwater runoff than thin, low-quality grasses.
- Leave a "Ring of Responsibility" around water bodies. Maintain a buffer zone of at least 25-feet when fertilizing near a body of water.
- Sweep or blow fertilizer off sidewalks, driveways and other impervious surfaces.
- Use deflector shields when fertilizing near a water body or impervious surface to ensure that only the grass is fertilized.
- New sod should not be fertilized for at least 30-days, until it has firmly rooted into the soil. Plugs can be fertilized at the time of installation to encourage quick growth.

### Irrigating

The St. Johns River Water Management District sets watering restrictions to ensure the efficient use of water for landscape irrigation. "Landscape irrigation" means the outside watering of plants in a landscape such as lawns, trees, shrubs, etc., that are situated in locations such as residential areas, public establishments, medians and right-of-way. This does not include agricultural crops, nurseries, golf courses and recreational fields.

### Summary of the Watering Restrictions:

- Irrigation is prohibited between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.
- During daylight savings time, irrigation is limited to no more than one day a week on scheduled days.
- During Eastern Standard Time, irrigation is limited to no more than one day a week on scheduled day.
- Irrigation is limited to no more than ¾ of an inch of water per zone per day and no more than one hour per zone per day.
- Irrigation limitations apply to water withdrawn from ground or surface water, from a private well or from a public or private utility.
- Exceptions – irrigation of new landscaping is allowed any time during the first 30-days, watering in of chemicals is allowed anytime within 24-hours of application.

Visit [www.sjrwmd.com](http://www.sjrwmd.com) for more information.

### Florida Yards and Neighborhoods

Use Florida Friendly, native or drought resistant plants in landscapes. Use of these types of plants will not only help conserve water, but it will also reduce the amount of contaminated stormwater runoff since they do not require as much fertilizer.

Make sure plants are placed properly with respect to sunlight, drainage, irrigation and space requirements. Follow the nine Florida Yards and Neighborhoods fundamental guidelines below:

### Fundamental Guidelines for Florida Yards and Neighborhoods

- Right Plant; Right Place
- Water Efficiently
- Fertilize Appropriately
- Mulch
- Attract Wildlife
- Manage Yard Pests Responsibly
- Recycle Yard Waste
- Reduce Stormwater Runoff
- Protect the Waterfront

For more information about the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, visit their website – <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>