

Common Misconceptions About Fertilizer Ordinances

Summertime Blackout Periods and More...

1. We don't need a fertilizer ordinance, do we?

Yes, we do! Fertilizers contain nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus to make plants grow, but when too much fertilizer is applied to the land, it runs off into our waterways and can cause big problems like algae blooms. Algae blooms can kill wildlife, smother seagrass, turn our beautiful blue water green, and can become harmful to human health. Biscayne Bay is particularly sensitive to algae blooms, and data shows we are at a tipping point where more nutrients will start causing serious blooms. 85 other municipalities and 32 other counties in the State of Florida have already passed ordinances to restrict fertilizer use in some way. Miami Dade County is one of the last counties in Florida without a fertilizer ordinance. This proposed fertilizer ordinance was specifically developed with Southeast Florida in mind.

2. Is this ban on using fertilizer in my garden?

No, this is not a fertilizer ban. You will still be able to use fertilizers. Specifically, this ordinance would create a setback from water bodies to reduce how much fertilizer gets into our waterways. It also limits how much and which kind of fertilizer you can use; we recommend slow release varieties. These recommendations will prevent you from using too much and wasting fertilizer. This ordinance will also include a blackout period on fertilizer use during the rainiest months of the summer, when our yards don't need fertilizer anyway.

3. Will it cost me more?

A fertilizer ordinance with a summer rainy season blackout will not cost you more. In fact, it may save you money in the long-run because you are not applying fertilizer that goes to waste when lost to heavy rainfall.

4. Do Community Members have to take the Best Management Practices (BMP) training?

No. Community members are not required to take the BMP training. While anyone is welcome to attend to learn more, the trainings are meant to serve as education for commercial applicators (landscapers) on fertilizer use.

5. Will they be enforcing fertilizer use on my property?

If passed, this ordinance will be a part of the municipal code and will be enforced just like any other part of the code. The primary focus for enforcement will be on Commercial applicators.

6. Will my fertilizer be confiscated?

Your fertilizer will not be confiscated.

7. Will my lawn die during the summer?

Your lawn will not die due to nutrient deficiency during the summer. This is because there is no dormant growth season in South Florida. What this means is that plant nutrient requirements are spread out throughout the year, requiring lower concentrations of nutrients overall.