



## SWFWMD launches *FIRST EVER* “Florida-Friendly Fertilizing” campaign focusing on improving area water quality

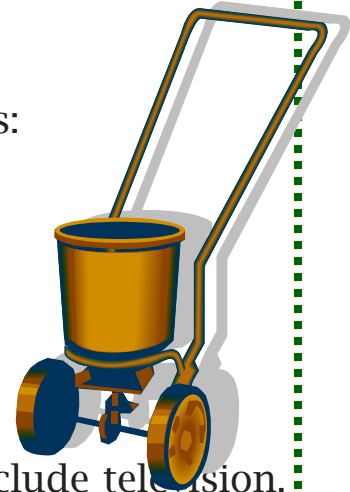
*Improperly applied fertilizers are harmful to our water bodies*

The Southwest Florida Water Management District kicked off a new multi-media public service advertising campaign this week to educate residents on how to fertilize their lawns appropriately.

Recent studies have shown that rising nitrate levels in many local water bodies can be traced to fertilizer. Nitrate is a form of nitrogen that is found in inorganic fertilizers. When fertilizer is needed and applied correctly, the lawn absorbs the nitrogen. However, fertilizers applied improperly can run off lawns and into local water bodies, harming water quality and threatening the plants and animals that depend on clean water for survival.

The campaign focuses on these Florida-friendly fertilizing tips:

- *Use slow-release fertilizers.*
- *Always follow package directions.*
- *Don't fertilize before a heavy rain.*
- *Fertilize only when needed and only when grass is actively growing.*



The 3-month, “**Florida-Friendly Fertilizing**” campaign will include television, radio and newspaper advertisements throughout the 16-county region. The District has also created a series of tools to help residents learn to apply fertilizer appropriately.

By visiting [www.WaterMatters.org/fertilizing](http://www.WaterMatters.org/fertilizing), residents can get step-by-step instructions on fertilizing appropriately as well as watch a series of corresponding how-to videos. Residents can also order the **FREE** 17-page, “*Do-It-Yourself Guide to Florida-Friendly Fertilizing*” for additional information.



Fertilizing appropriately is one of the nine principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, a set of guidelines developed by the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to protect our natural resources while promoting beautiful landscapes.