



**Residential Horticulture Program
UF IFAS Extension at Seminole County
Help Desk 407-665-5550**

Florida-Friendly Fertilizing & Watering

Fertilizers are designed to make your lawn green, healthy and more stress-tolerant. To maintain health, turfgrass needs nutrients, some of which are supplied by your soil.

In some cases, fertilizer is necessary because your soil cannot supply the grass with all the nutrients it needs to stay healthy and green over the years.

When needed, fertilizer should be applied according to UF/IFAS guidelines.

If applied correctly, fertilizer can help your lawn stay healthy by:

- Increasing leaf and root growth.
- Aiding in the recovery from pest damage and environmental stresses.
- Reducing and controlling weeds.
- Replacing nutrients lost to plant growth and leaching.

A good approach to proper fertilization is to start with a soil test. Many Florida soils are naturally high in **phosphorus**, one of three major nutrients in fertilizer. Your soil test will also tell you about your soil's pH (acidity or alkalinity) levels and other nutrient levels.

To prevent fertilizer from washing into water bodies, it's important to know the right time to fertilize. Follow these tips before fertilizing:

- Consider the time of year, climate, soil type and, most important, type of grass and health or condition of the lawn before applying fertilizer.
- Fertilize only when the grass is actively growing. For instance, during the winter, grass is **dormant** in many areas of Florida; therefore, fertilizer is not necessary.

Fertilizer applied when grass is not growing wastes your money and time, since it will not be beneficially used by the grass. Instead, it will leach through the soil or run off and pollute nearby water bodies.

To avoid storing leftover fertilizer, decide how much you need before you make a purchase. Don't guess! Measure your property and calculate the total square footage of turfgrass. Landscape bed areas have different fertilizer needs. Always follow the label. All fertilizer labels have three bold numbers. The first number on the label represents nitrogen, the second number represents phosphorus and the third number represents **potassium**. These are the three major nutrients your lawn needs to thrive. In general, select a fertilizer where the first and third numbers on the label are equal or in a 2:1 ratio and the middle number is zero or as low as possible. When applying fertilizer, the most important thing to remember is to read and follow the instructions on the fertilizer bag. Proper application will ensure maximum coverage, resulting in a healthy lawn while protecting water bodies. Water-in your fertilizer after application with no more than ¼ inch of water. This will put the nutrients at root level, where they can be taken up most efficiently. Watering-in with more water than ¼ inch can result in the fertilizer leaching more rapidly through the soil. Regardless of the season, grass needs no more than ½ to ¾ inch of water each time you irrigate. Irrigation frequency will vary by location, soil type, amount of shade, temperature and other lawn characteristics and stresses.

In the winter months, grass growth is less active and may need to be watered every 10 to 14 days. Overwatering in the winter can encourage pests and disease in your lawn. In the summer months, grass growth is more active and may need to be watered every 2 to 3 days. However, normal summer rainfall often supplies enough water, so you can operate your irrigation system manually and wait to turn it on as needed.

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
IFAS ~ EXTENSION**
<http://solutionsforyourlife.com>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>
<http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu>

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.

Master Gardener Volunteer Program- Interested?

- Fill out an on-line application
- Be interviewed and pass background check
- Commit to 75 hours of volunteer service
- Complete the training and internship program

Training is offered annually and is presented on a weekday from 9:30am-4:00pm for 14-16 weeks.

To continue to be certified the required volunteer is a minimum of 35 hours and 10 hours of continuing education yearly.

For more information on the program contact

Gabrielle Milch

Residential Horticulturist
Seminole County Extension
407-665-5558

gmilch@seminolecountyfl.gov

HORTICULTURAL SERVICES



Soil Testing Tests performed Mon. & Fri.
Fee \$2.00 per sample

Samples accepted Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:00pm

Plant Clinic Mon.- Fri. 9:00am - noon
1:00pm- 4:00pm
Bring in a sample

"Ask A Master Gardener" Call 407-665-5550
Phone Service Mon.- Fri. 9:00am - noon
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Speakers, Workshops, Special events
Free Publications on many lawn & garden topics

Solitary Bees- Important Pollinators You Might Not Think About

Carpenter bees, mining bees and leafcutting bees are all solitary bees which are active in early spring. Solitary bees don't form social colonies but live as single bees. Each female does her own work to provision a nest cell with nectar and pollen as food for her offspring.

Carpenter bees are often seen hovering around houses and wooden fences on warm spring days. They can sometimes be considered pests if they resemble bumblebees but differ in that they have a black shiny abdomen while a bumblebee's abdomen is hairy with some yellow markings. Females excavate tunnels (galleries) in wood. Males guard the galleries and may fly close to your face as a threat. But it is an act. Males can't sting and are harmless. Females can sting but rarely do unless confined or highly agitated. This type of bees maybe considered pests due to them taking up residence in your home. People often notice the perfectly round holes up to ½ inch in diameter that females make in wood. These are entrance holes to the galleries. Each gallery contains six to eight cells. Each cell is provisioned with a ball of pollen on which the female lays an egg. Larvae develop in the cell and emerge as adults in late summer. Adults overwinter in old tunnels and emerge in spring to start the process again. Carpenter bees prefer unpainted wood. A fresh coat of oil-based paint on exposed wood surfaces is an effective way to deter the bees. Wood stains are less effective. Treating entrance holes with an insecticide spray or dust containing carbaryl (Sevin) or pyrethroids such as cyfluthrin may reduce damage. After a couple of days, plug the hole with wood putty or a piece of wood dowel coated with wood glue. This reduces the chance of offspring emergence and reuse of the tunnels.

Mining bees may build a large number of nests in lawns during spring. They are about ½ inch in length with a black body. Females excavate vertical shafts in the soil with entrance holes that are about the diameter of a pencil. Several brood chambers are provisioned with pollen and nectar on which an egg is deposited. Larvae develop and emerge as adult bees the following spring to begin the cycle again. Males can't sting. Females aren't likely to sting unless stepped on, handled or threatened. They have a tendency to concentrate their nests in a relatively small area. It may appear that the grass is thin because of the bees but it is more likely that the bees are in the area because the grass was already thin. Mining bees are beneficial in that they help aerate the soil and serve as pollinators. Therefore, control is usually not necessary.

Leafcutting bees are important native pollinators of North America. They use cut leaves to construct nests in cavities (mostly in rotting wood). They create multiple cells in the nest, each with a single larva and pollen for the larva to eat. Leafcutting bees are important pollinators of wildflowers, fruits, vegetables and other crops. Some leafcutting bees, *Osmia* spp. are even used as commercial pollinators (like honey bees) in crops such as alfalfa and blueberries. Leafcutting bees are found throughout the world and are common in North America. In Florida there are approximately 63 different species (plus five subspecies) within seven genera of leafcutter bees: *Ashmeadiella*, *Heriades*, *Hoplitis*, *Coelioxys*, *Lithurgus*, *Megachile*, and *Osmia*. Leafcutting bees construct these nests in soil, in holes (usually made by other insects) in wood, and in plant stems. A diversity of cavities, such as shells of dead snails, holes in concrete walls (like those produced for hurricane shutters) and other holes in man-made objects are used as nesting sites.



FLORIDA YARDS & NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

www.seminolecountyfl.gov/fyn

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Right Plant, Right Place | 6. Manage Yard Pests Responsibly |
| 2. Water Efficiently | 7. Recycle |
| 3. Fertilize Appropriately | 8. Reduce Stormwater Runoff |
| 4. Mulch | 9. Protect the Waterfront |
| 5. Attract Wildlife | |

How to Work with Your Home Owner Association to Convert to a Florida-Friendly Yard

The Community Associations Institute estimates that over sixty million people live in HOA governed neighborhoods. The purpose of an HOA is to protect property values by controlling the appearance of homes, their landscapes, and common areas. A Florida-Friendly yard follows nine principles to promote environmental health. This may include reducing the amount of turf, choosing drought tolerant plants, installing a rain barrel, creating butterfly gardens or adding edibles to the landscape. A potential conflict exists when a Florida-Friendly yard's utility does not meet an HOA's aesthetics. That said, a Florida-Friendly yard can take a variety of forms. Florida-Friendly need not conflict with HOA standards if it is pursued with careful planning, thoughtful design, and a knowledgeable approach.

First, you need to know the rules. Become familiar with the FFL nine principles. You haven't assumed your yard is Florida-Friendly without reading the handbook (http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/materials/FYN_Handbook_vSept09.pdf), have you? Also understand the Florida-Friendly State Law. There is a compelling public interest to have environmentally-conscious landscape so no local government can prohibit these good intentions. Still you need to know your HOA landscaping rules and regulations. An HOA can exert significant influence on a yard while still being Florida-Friendly.

Second, get to know surrounding landscapes better. What is the general look for your community? View photos of certified Florida-Friendly landscapes. Do an inventory and analysis of your yard to see what makes design sense.

Lastly, start designing! Make a list of the "right plants" (FFL Principle #1) for your yard. Incorporate hardscapes and groundcovers to help your landscape become neat and contained. When you've developed your landscape, share it with your HOA; include a description in your application so the review board has a clear picture of the beautiful and suitable landscape you're after.

Further details are described in Ten Strategies for Working with Your Home Owner Association (HOA) to Convert to a Florida-Friendly Yard" (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep513>).

If you would like more help with dealing with HOA conflicts, there's a free workshop you can attend. *Florida-Friendly Landscaping Legally Speaking: FFL in the Planned Community. April 30th 1:00 - 4:30 pm. The Villages of Sumter County Service Center, 7375 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL 34785 Room 102.*

Please checkout our website <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Contact Taryn Sudol at (407-665-5575) or email (fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov).

EVASIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH Tropical Soda Apple *Solanum viarum*

Tropical soda apple (TSA) is a native to Brazil and Argentina. Since its discovery in the United States, it has been found in many southern states including Florida, North Carolina, and Mississippi. It was first collected in Glades County, Florida in 1988. It is estimated that approximately one million acres of pasture, sod farms, forests, ditches, natural areas, etc. are covered with TSA in Florida. Tropical soda apple is extremely prolific, producing roughly 40,000 to 50,000 seeds per plant. Seed is spread primarily via livestock and wildlife, such as raccoons, deer, and birds that consume the fruit. If TSA is not controlled in pastures it can lead to reduced yields in terms of lower stocking rates and lower forage quality. Dispersal is also accomplished through contaminated equipment, hay, seed, sod, and composted manure. Cattle, sod, as well as other transported goods carry the potential of spreading this invasive weed to other parts of the state and country. This concern and its rapid spread throughout Florida caused TSA to be placed on the Florida Noxious Weed List in 1994 and the Federal Noxious list in 1995. Tropical soda apple is in the family Solanaceae, or Nightshade family. This family also contains potato, eggplant, and tomato. TSA is an herbaceous perennial, growing 3-6 feet tall. Leaves are pubescent, deeply divided into pointed lobes. White to yellowish thorns up to 0.4 inch-long are found on the stems, flower stalks, leaves (both upper and lower surfaces), and calyxes. Flowers are white with yellow stamens and are found on the stem below the leaves. Fruits are globular in shape and are green in color when young, yellow at maturity. The most effective means of controlling TSA is the *prevention of fruit production*. Maintaining a quality turf through proper fertilization, watering, insect and disease control is the first step in tropical soda apple suppression. Proper cutting and/or stocking rate will also maintain good growing conditions for the forage and keep TSA from gaining a foothold.

CATEGORY I on the **Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's (FLEPPC) 2013 List of Invasive Plant Species**

The **UF/IFAS Assessment** lists plants according to their invasive status in Florida



Pest Alert: Crazy ant *paratrechina longicornis*

The crazy ant, *Paratrechina longicornis* (Latreille), occurs in large numbers in homes or out-of-doors. Ants of this species often forage long distances away from their nests, so nests are often difficult to control. The ant is medium reddish-brown, grayish to blackish in color. Workers of any one species all similar in size. Run erratically and quickly. Long and slender, with long legs and antennae. *P. longicornis* has especially long appendages. They nest in soil or under objects resting on the ground, like potted plants, bags of soil, toys. Also in trash piles, rotten wood, and trees buttresses. Nests are transitory and ants may be seen relocating, carrying brood from one nest site to another. Males and females are winged but wings are removed from females before they are fully mature, and males have never been seen to fly. Usually seen in large numbers running erratically, so distinct trails are difficult to discriminate between living and dead insects. They collect honeydew from sap-sucking insects and plants. They also collect seeds, forage for sweets, proteins, fats and other food crumbs in homes. *P. longicornis* may be seasonal in diet preference, preferring proteins in the summer and sweet foods in the spring and fall.





**MASTER
GARDENER**
UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

We will help with your
gardening and
landscaping questions.

Monday - Friday
9:00am - 12:00pm
1:00pm - 4:00pm
407-665-5550

A word about “organic” pesticides. Beware, if labeled “organic” (which usually means it is derived from a plant) does not mean that it is not toxic. Organically derived pesticides (like nicotine sulfate, rotenone, sabadilla, etc.) usually break down quickly in the environment, but can be toxic to bees, fish and mammals (including humans). **In the hot summer months only apply early morning.**

Environment-friendly Spray

1 gallon water
2 Tbsp. dish soap
(without degreasers)
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil

Make sure the plant is not stressed from lack of water; if so water it thoroughly before spraying. Spray in the cooler part of the day. Thorough coverage of the plant is important.

Homemade Fungicide

1 gallon of water
4 teaspoons of baking soda
1oz. Horticulture oil (1 1/2 Tbsp.)

Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) in combination with horticultural oils has been shown to control powdery mildew and black spot on roses. Spray weekly to prevent disease.

Test products on a small portion of the plant; wait a day or two: inspect the plant for damage before spraying

“Ask A Master Gardener”

Q. How much should I water?

A. The amount of water applied each time you irrigate your lawn should not vary seasonally, though the frequency with which you water will change by season. An efficient watering wets only the turfgrass root zone, does not saturate the soil, and does not allow water to run off. Florida soils are typically sandy and hold 1 inch of water in the top 12 inches of soil. If the roots are in the top 12 inches of soil and the soil is dry, then ½ to ¾ inch of water is required to wet the area thoroughly. Light, frequent watering is inefficient and encourages shallow root systems. Excessive irrigation, which keeps the root system saturated with water, is also harmful to the lawn. A simple watering schedule would apply ½ to ¾ inch of water when the turfgrass begins to show drought stress symptoms. Once this amount of water is applied, do not apply again until drought is noticeable. If it rains, suspend irrigation until visible drought stress symptoms appear.

Q. How do I do the catch a can test?



Lawns only need about ¾ inch of water in one watering session. Place empty tuna cans or measuring cups around the yard (all within range of the sprinkler, some close, some farther away). Turn on the sprinkler for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, measure the amount of water collected in each can/cup. Check to see if there was even distribution of water in all the cans/cups. If the cans/cups collected ¾ inch of water, then you know you need to water for 30 minutes. If the cans/cups collected more or less than ¾ inch of water, then calculate approximately how long you need to water your landscape so that it receives ¾ inch of water in each watering session. Make sure the water lands on your plants and grass and not on paved areas.

For micro irrigation check <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>
For more information

Seminole County Water Conservation Ordinance #2009-24 states residential homeowners may only irrigate
one day per week

- If your house is odd # only on Saturday
- If your house is even # only on Sunday
- Commercial irrigation only on Tuesday
- **No watering** between 10:00am-4:00pm
- Limited to no more than ¾ in. per zone
- Limited to one hour per zone

Did you want to know; Ideas for butterfly gardens, latest citrus pest, save water?

Florida School Gardens

http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/school_gardens

Florida-Friendly Landscaping

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

Solutions for Your Life

<http://solutionsforyourlife.com>

Gardening in a Minute

<http://GardeningInAMinute.com>

EDIS

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>



EVENTS UPDATE ~ mark your calendar!

<p>Seminole County Extension</p> <p>Residential Horticulture</p> <p>407-665-5550</p> <p>250 W. County Home Rd Sanford FL 32773 Located across from Flea World, 17-92 & County Home Road — — — — —</p> <p>Your Community Resource For Gardening And Landscaping Information — — — — —</p> <p>www.seminolecountyfl.gov/ Coopext/</p> <p>Cooperative Extension Services Seminole County Office</p>	<p>April 2, 2015 6:30pm– 8:30pm</p> <p>Wildflowers & Native plants 250 W. County Home Rd. Sanford, Fl. Seminole Extension Auditorium FREE!!!! Regist. required 407-665-5558 https://evenbrite.com/event/16129211907</p> <p>April 11, 2015 9:00am– 1:00pm</p> <p>Sanford Water Wise Lowe's 3780 Orlando Dr. US Hwy 17-92 Sanford, Florida June 19 ,2014</p> <p>April 16, 2015 5:30pm-8:30pm</p> <p>Winter Springs Arbor Day Winter Springs City Hall Comm. Chambers 1126 E. SR434 Winter Springs</p>
<p>SEMINOLE GREENTHUMB</p> <p>Free quarterly Newsletter</p> <p>To receive by email gmilch@seminolecountyfl.gov</p>	<p>April 22, 2015 6:30pm - 8:30pm</p> <p>The Too Wet Yard Municipal Services Complex 911 Wallace Ct. Lake Mary Free!!! fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov</p> <p>May 11, 2015 6:30pm– 8:30pm</p> <p>Florida-Friendly Ways To Save Water West Branch Library Longwood 245 N. Hunt Club Blvd. Longwood Registration required 407-665-5558 fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov</p>
<p>Newsletter Contributors:</p> <p><i>Stephanie Powers MaggieTeal Gabrielle Milch Taryn Sudol</i></p>	<p>May 20,2015 9:30pm-8:30pm</p> <p>The New Gardener 250 W. County Home Rd. Sanford, Fl. Seminole Extension Auditorium FREE!!!! Regist. required 407-665-5558 fyn@seminolecountyfl.gov</p>
<p>Seminole County: USDA Hardiness Zone 9b Amer.Hort.Soc. Heat Zone 10</p>	