



Sarasota County Recommendations for Fertilizer and Irrigation To Control Nutrient Loads to Ponds

By the Rivendell Ponds and Preserves Committee – Updated 10/12/18

Rivendell's interconnected ponds are subject to algae blooms exacerbated by the cumulative effect of runoff of fertilizer from all of our lawns and community common areas. Sarasota County has an Ordinance aimed at controlling fertilizer runoff into County waters and a set of guidelines related to managing irrigation in a responsible way that both saves water and reduces fertilizer runoff from over-watered lawns. By working together to follow these recommendations, we minimize the presence of unsightly algae in our ponds and benefit our community. *Selected* recommendations are:

- If your fertilizer is being applied by a commercial organization, confirm that they are certified for Sarasota County and that they are fully complying with the restrictions in the Sarasota County Ordinance. This should be done annually or if you change applicators. **See:** <https://www.scgov.net/government/utilities-water/water-services/fertilizer-management>
- Determine if a reduced amount of fertilizer can be applied to your lawn.
- If you apply your own fertilizer, obtain a copy of the brochure - *What you need to know about Sarasota County's Fertilizer & Landscape Management Code*. Copies are available from Frank Freestone, Chair of the Ponds and Preserves Committee at paddlemania@verizon.net.
- The Ordinance mandates that fertilizer not be applied within ten feet of a pond or preserve, and recommends that a six-foot-wide Low Maintenance Zone be installed and maintained along “any water body or wetland.” One purpose of this Zone is to absorb nutrients from runoff.
- Additionally, the Ordinance mandates that:
 - Fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorous cannot be applied between June 1 to Sept. 30 of each year, and specific limitations are placed on the allowable amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous when applied during allowable times.
 - Deflector shields are required on all broadcast spreaders to prevent fertilizer from being applied within 10 feet of any water body or wetland.
 - Grass clippings and other vegetative debris shall not be deposited into ponds or on roads.
- Sarasota County irrigation guidelines specify:
 - Irrigation is allowed only on Tuesdays for even-numbered building addresses and Thursdays for odd. No irrigation between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Timers should be seasonally adjusted to provide minimum needed water for the time of year.
 - Rain sensors are required to be installed and maintained.
 - Sprinkler heads need to be inspected regularly and maintained in good condition to assure that water is not being sprayed onto streets or other non-landscaped areas, and that they are operating properly. Avoid double-watering (both you and your neighbor) of zones in swales. See: <https://www.scgov.net/Home/ShowDocument?id=8718>