

Landscaper and vendor standards

One of the worst things for a pond is the inflow of fertilizers, nutrients and debris.

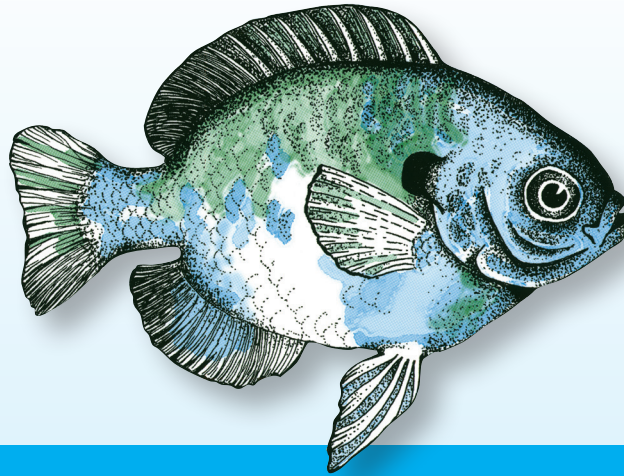
Green industry professionals need to know how to help prevent this in order to help you maintain your lake and ponds in healthy, clean condition.

- Did you know Florida Statute 482.1562 states that all commercial fertilizer applicators must have a state license as of Jan 1, 2014?
- Consider a "Prohibited Application Period" between June 1 and Sept 30th when no fertilizers are to be applied. This is to prevent runoff into lakes during periods of heavy rain.
- Never fertilize within 10' of the water's edge and check weather forecast before applying.



What Else Should I Know?

Have the lakes or ponds inspected annually for access and safety, condition of pond structures, erosion, trash and debris, nuisance wild life and proper function of fountains and aerators. Lake Doctors can provide an 18-item checklist upon request.



References

Florida Friendly Landscaping, 9 principals of FL Friendly Yards, GI-BMP Training and Overview
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

Best Management Practices for Enhancement of Environmental Quality
www.dep.state.fl.water.nonpoint/docs/nonpoint/glfbmp07.pdf

Model Ordinance for Florida Friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes
www.dept.state.fl.water/nonpoint/docs/nonpoint/dep-fert-modelord.pdf

Neighborhood Stormwater Pond Maintenance Log and Resources
www.clemson.edu/extension/natural_resources/water/Stormwater_ponds/resources



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Why are lakes and ponds so difficult to maintain?

There are many factors that include shallow depth, presence of hard-to-control weeds and algae, warm year-around temperatures and runoff of fertilizer and pollutants into the water.

- The first thing to consider is to study up on “best management practices”, i.e. BMP
- BMP for ponds are science-based lawn and landscape practices that help conserve and protect ground and surface waters.
- Examples include fertilizer practices, use of lowest possible amounts of herbicides in the water, aeration and weed and algae-eating fish.
- Integrated Pest Management, known as IPM, is a strategy that helps maintain ponds with as few chemicals as possible. This is accomplished by utilizing a combination of methods including alternatives to harsh chemicals, low use of EPA-registered materials, use of biological controls, and circulation and oxygenation of the water by use of aerators and fountains.



What can be done to help my waterway?

As in many cases, there is no set one-size-fits-all solution, but there are common-sense approaches that recognize that a healthy lake or pond is kept so in densely populated areas by a number of practices, some of which are listed below.

Try these suggestions for a healthier lake

Fertilize at recommended rates, time application to prevent leaching, and use slow-release fertilizer with little or no phosphorous.

Reduce frequency of mowing at lake edge and collect or direct clippings to upland areas where runoff will not carry them back into the lake.

Never allow clippings, garbage, fertilizer, chemicals or anything but water to get into the street drains and culverts. Most flow directly into the nearest lake or body of water.

Consider establishing a 5' to 10' buffer zone along the lake edge to filter, absorb and reduce nutrients and debris going into the lake or pond.

Other Lake and pond tips:

Hire a reputable, professional lake management company that understands and uses BMP's and IPM programs.

Dredge or remove excess sediment BEFORE it becomes a problem. Make sure water flow is maintained between interconnected lakes, ponds and drainage ditches.

Pick up pet wastes that can get into the water and contribute harmful bacteria and nutrients.

One more suggestion:

It has been proven over and over again that one of the very best practices is the installation of an effective aeration system in problem lakes and ponds. These systems, whether they are surface aerators or bottom air diffusers, can create circulation, oxidize nutrients, equalize temperature, increase oxygen and reduce odors.

