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**MEDIA RELEASE**
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**Fertilizer ordinance in effect for Hernando County**
(Brooksville, FL) Starting January 1, 2020, a fertilizer ordinance will be in effect for Hernando County through March 31, 2020. This ordinance regulates how, where and when fertilizers can be applied to grass. During this time period, only professional applicators who are trained, certified and registered according to the terms of the ordinance may apply fertilizer. The only forms of nitrogen fertilizer that may be applied during this period are those that are labeled as slow- or controlled-release. The applicator must be able to verify the fertilizer product used and provide the verification upon request.

Studies conducted by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection have determined that one of the primary causes of water quality issues in Weeki Wachee Springs and the Weeki Wachee River comes from inappropriate fertilizer use. When applied incorrectly, excess nutrients wash off lawns into neighboring water bodies causing excessive algae growth and stressing aquatic insects, amphibians and fish.

**Here are tips on how residents can help:**

- Do not fertilize your lawn from January 1 through March 31 unless you hire a certified landscape professional
- Ask your fertilizer professional if he or she has a certificate of training through the Green Industries—Best Management Practices Program
- Watch the weather and don't fertilize when the National Weather Service calls for a heavy rain, flood, tropical storm or hurricane watch or warning, or when the soil is still saturated
- Hold off fertilizing new plants, turf seeding or sod until at least 30 days after planting
- Do not fertilize within 10 feet of a water body. It is recommended to use plants that don't require fertilizer for these areas
- Immediately clean up fertilizer that spills on your driveway, sidewalk or street. Never allow fertilizer, grass clippings, pet waste, plant debris, gasoline or oil to be washed, swept or blown off sidewalks or roadways into stormwater drains, ditches, canals, water bodies or wetlands

- Follow the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences best management practices for landscapes. For information, contact the Hernando County UF Extension office at (352) 754-4433 or visit fyn.ifas.ufl.edu

**Important contact information:**

- Call the Hernando County UF/IFAS Extension office at (352) 754-4433 for more information about the ordinance
- Visit http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/hernandoco/2018/02/01/hernando-countys-fertilizer-ordinance/ to read the full ordinance
- Call the Hernando County Permitting office at (352) 754-4050 if you are a professional applicator who needs to register with the County




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