Stormdrains connect directly to our lakes and ponds. They carry rainwater away from urban areas to prevent flooding.

Yard waste entering stormdrains creates algae and uses up the oxygen that fish need to survive. Reducing runoff pollution in your yard is easy. What you do in your yard can make a big difference to the 554 lakes in Polk County.

The State of Florida requires all counties with impaired waterways to adopt a fertilizer management ordinance. High levels of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) in Polk County’s waterways can impair water quality. Some of these nutrients come from misapplication of fertilizer.

Polk County’s fertilizer management ordinance (no. 13-005) affects everyone who applies fertilizer, including homeowners, landscapers and lawn care professionals. It is intended to protect the water quality and the natural habitats of our waterways.

Did you know that stormdrains are not connected to water treatment plants?

Here’s where you can find more information on Polk County’s fertilizer ordinance:

- Parks & Natural Resources Division
  863.534.7377 • polk-county.net
- UF/IFAS Polk County Extension Service
  863.519.8677 • www.polkhort.com
- Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program
  www.polklyn.com

The Polk County fertilizer ordinance prohibits the disposal of yard waste into stormdrains. Violators could face penalties.
Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles

Following the principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ can help you comply with the fertilizer ordinance. For more information on the nine principles below, go to http://polkfyn.com.

- Right Plant, Right Place
- Water Efficiently
- Fertilize Appropriately
- Mulch
- Attract Wildlife
- Manage Yard Pests Responsibly
- Recycle
- Reduce Stormwater Runoff
- Protect the Waterfront

Do your part. Fertilize Smart! Follow these Rules.

Wait 30. Newly-installed landscapes can’t efficiently use nitrogen, so do not apply fertilizer for the first 30 days.

Step back 10. Keep fertilizer at least 10 feet away from any wetland or body of water.

Sweep it up. Sweep any fertilizer granules that fall onto sidewalks, streets or driveways back into the lawn.

On your guard. Use a deflector shield on your fertilizer spreader so you spread fertilizer only where you need it.

Keep the clippings. It is against the law to blow leaves or grass clippings into the roadway. Blow them back onto your lawn. They can supply some of the nitrogen your grass needs and reduce the amount of fertilizer needed.

Watch the weather. Do not fertilize on days when heavy rain is forecast. Rainstorms don’t water in fertilizer they wash it away, wasting your money and polluting our water.

Follow the label. Fertilizer applications should be made according to the manufacturer’s label or as recommended by the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program.

Go low maintenance. Establish a low maintenance zone 10 feet from all bodies of water. This area should be planted and managed for minimal watering and mowing, eliminating the need to fertilize.

Apply it right. Do not apply fertilizer that exceeds the range recommended for the plant species. Single application rates of fast release nitrogen should not exceed 0.5 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Slow release nitrogen should not exceed one pound per 1,000 square feet.

How much should you apply?

1. Know the size of your yard.
   
   Width x length = square feet
   
   Then subtract the square footage of your house, driveway and/or patio for your yard size.

2. Read the label on the front of the fertilizer bag for nitrogen content.

3. Use this table to calculate what you need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nitrogen % in bag</th>
<th>Pounds per 1000 square feet</th>
<th>Slow release</th>
<th>Quick release</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We recommend NOT fertilizing during the rainy season of June - September.