

Green lawns, Blue ponds

Green lawns don't have to mean green ponds (but they usually do). Beautiful yards and ponds can go hand in hand. **By following a few simple landscaping guidelines designed for our Florida climate you can keep your lawn green and your pond blue.**

Here are six practices to keep your pond beautiful and ecologically healthy. The basic fact is that nutrients (fertilizer) make plants grow. Nutrients in the pond almost always cause algae growth. Fertilizer belong on the land, not in the water.

- 1 Fertilizer is needed only twice a year; fall and spring. Although many lawn services recommend fertilizing more frequently, more frequent fertilizing will usually result in greener lakes.
- 2 Fertilizer should usually be a slow-release type. This form of fertilizer helps keep most of the product on your lawn, rather than in the pond. Fast release fertilizer products can leach as much as 60% of their nutrient value into your lakes with the first hard rain.
- 3 Fertilizer is rarely needed within 15 feet of the water. This area stays moister and produces healthy grass and shrubs little or no fertilizer. Following this principle alone can reduce the algae production by 40%.
- 4 Reduce or eliminate fertilizer within five feet of any impervious surface. Fertilizer applied next to the sidewalk, street or driveway easily washes onto the hard surface, then flows quickly into your pond. Remember that all water from every roof, driveway, lawn and street in your community runs directly into your ponds, with no filtration of any kind.
- 5 Do not fertilize within 48 hours of a forecast rain. If a landscaper does your fertilizing, specify this in the contract. Choose any forecast & impose a penalty if your fertilizer is applied before a forecast rain.
- 6 Keep grass clippings out of the lake. The tips of grass blades that are cut during mowing contain high quantity of nitrogen and algae loves nitrogen. High quality lawn crews will always blow grass clippings away from the lake. It's better for your lawn, and especially better for your pond. Never blow grass clipping into a storm drain. It's just like throwing fertilizer into the lake.
- 7 Never allow pet waste to enter the pond. This product is more nutritious than grass clippings. Even pet waste left to decompose within 15 feet of the pond accelerates algae blooms.

These six practices will help keep your lawns greener and ponds clearer. This article is basic information. Some landscape professionals may disagree. For more information check <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/21> **Check link**