

A message from your
Lee Board of County Commissioners



DO YOUR PART. FERTILIZE SMART!

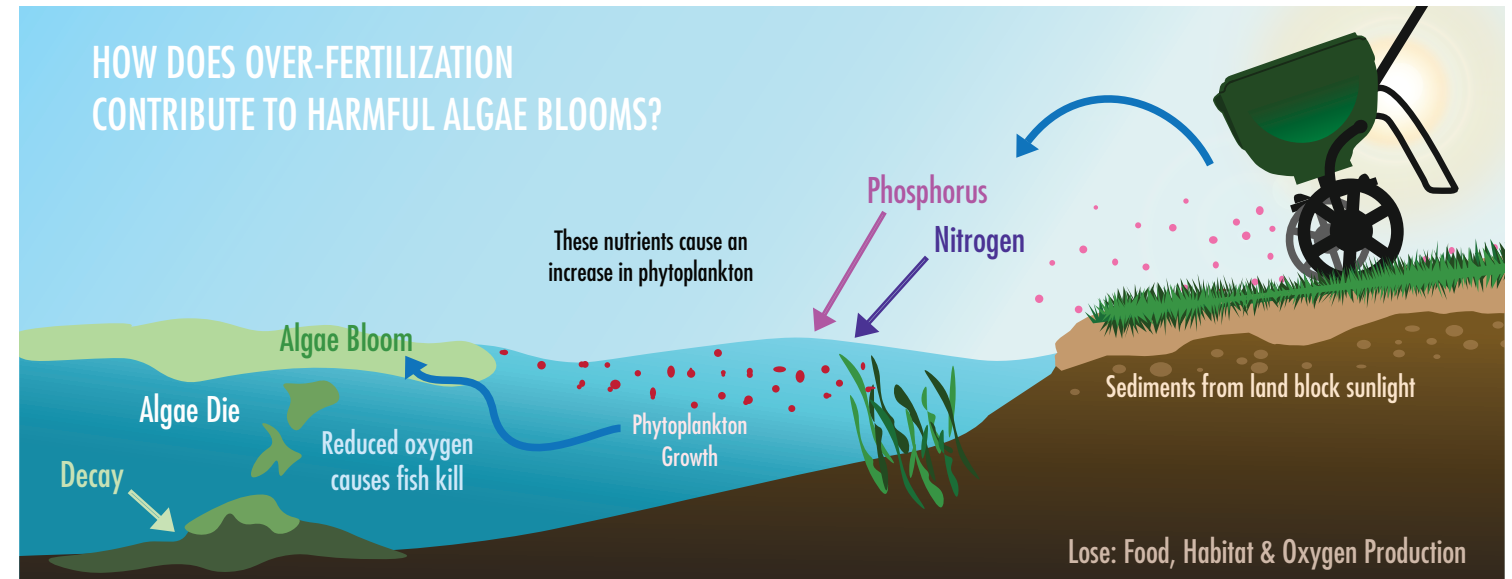
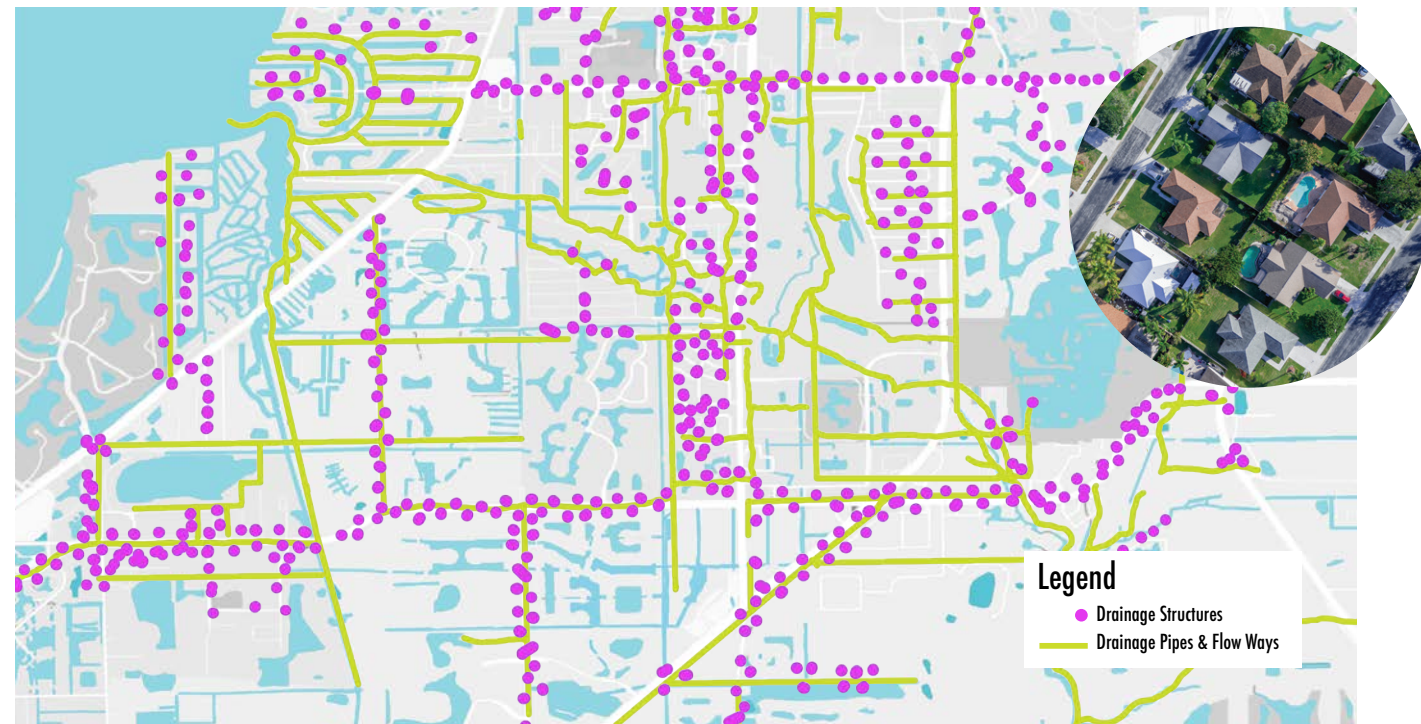
As the summer wet season approaches, there are actions you can take to minimize blue-green and red tide algae from impacting our waterways and beaches.

First and foremost, you can do your part by Fertilizing Smart! Improper application of fertilizers contributes to runoff, which sends these nutrients into our waters. Common mistakes include applying more than the recommended amount and using the wrong formula at the wrong time, such as the nitrogen and phosphorus formulas banned by ordinance from June through September.

While a significant portion of the nutrients that feed blue-green algae blooms comes from outside of Lee County, about 1/3 of the nutrients in the Caloosahatchee are contributed from communities located west of Lake Okeechobee. We can reduce that nutrient runoff if we all do our part by Fertilizing Smart!

We all live on the water.

Runoff redirects nutrients from our lawns to the drainage structures, drainage pipes and flow ways and, ultimately, into our waterways.



HOW YOU CAN FERTILIZE SMART!

LOOK AT THE LABEL

Notice all fertilizer labels have three bold numbers. These represent the primary nutrients: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K). A bag of 10-10-10 fertilizer contains 10% nitrogen, 10% phosphate and 10% potash.



JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Look for the double zeros!

OCTOBER THROUGH MAY

While it may be okay to use nitrogen and phosphorus formulas, choose a slow-release fertilizer. Slow release fertilizers for turf grasses, for instance, generally have a higher nitrogen ratio, such as 18-6-12. Slow release fertilizers for flowering or fruiting plants may have higher ratios of phosphorus. A good slow release fertilizer for vegetable gardens should also contain calcium and magnesium.

ALWAYS REMEMBER

- 1 SWEEP UP SPILLS**
Avoid accidents and always sweep up spilled granules. Rinsing with a hose can wash them down storm drains and into our waterways.
- 2 AVOID HARD SURFACES AND WATER BODIES**
Don't fertilize within 10 feet of bodies of water and keep it off impervious surfaces like driveways or sidewalks to prevent runoff.
- 3 DON'T FERTILIZE IF RAIN IS FORECAST**
Rainfall can wash fertilizer into storm drains or cause it to leach through the soil, sending unwanted nutrients into our waters.

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

- Use only the recommended amount of fertilizer. Only a small amount can be taken up by plants' roots—more is not better!
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They become "organic fertilizer" as they decay and letting those nutrients stay where they are can help keep them out of our waterways.
- Leave a wide strip of deep-rooted plants along shoreland. Instead of planting and mowing turfgrass that can easily get trimmings into the water, plant wildflowers, ornamental grasses, shrubs or trees that can absorb and filter runoff that contains nutrients and soil.
- Pick up pet waste and throw it in the trash. It's not just polite; it eliminates a source of organic material from decaying into nutrients for algae.

For more info, including which Southwest Florida communities and municipalities have fertilizer ordinances, as well as additional resources, visit fertilizesmart.com.

