

FLORIDIANS' RESIDENTIAL FERTILIZER USE



In a recent study conducted by the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center), Florida residents were asked about their current and future fertilizer practices, in addition to their perceptions of best management practices (BMPs).

FERTILIZER APPLICATION PRACTICES

When asked about their specific fertilizer application behaviors, nearly half (42.6%) of respondents water-in fertilizers after application and 41.6% remove fertilizer from paved surfaces. Respondents indicated that they do not apply fertilizers based on soil tests (35.6%) and they do not ask landscape professionals if they have fertilizer applicator training (30.6%).

Respondents determine the amount of fertilizer applied to their lawn by reading the fertilizer package directions (389 selections) and landscape company recommendations (371 selections).

TOP MONTHS FOR RESIDENTIAL FERTILIZER APPLICATIONS



When asked to identify which months fertilizer is applied to their lawns, March (25.3%), April (19.7%) and September (15.7%) were ranked highest in frequency.

SOIL TESTING

When asked about their history of using soil tests, the majority of respondents (65.2%) indicated they had not had their soil tested in the last 12 months. Beyond 12 months, approximately 41.4% of respondents had not conducted soil tests on a frequent basis.



Most Floridians do not utilize soil test results when applying fertilizer.

FERTILIZER PURCHASING TRENDS

Most of the survey participants (60.8%) reported purchasing their own fertilizer. The most common types purchased included “weed and feed” fertilizers and dry, granulated fertilizers. Roughly half buy their fertilizer from a home improvement store.



Respondents most often purchase “weed and feed” fertilizer.



PERCEPTIONS OF FERTILIZER BEST PRACTICES

Respondents were asked how they perceive several best management practices associated with residential fertilizer application. Most respondents (66.5%) felt personally obligated to read the fertilizer label before application and to carefully apply fertilizer according to their lawn's needs (70.4%).



66.5% OF FLORIDIANS FEEL OBLIGATED TO READ THE FERTILIZER LABEL PRIOR TO APPLICATION.

Respondents indicated that their family and friends had little impact on their fertilizer behaviors, with many respondents reporting they do not feel an obligation to encourage their friends and families to follow best management practices.

Floridians' fertilizer habits are not motivated by their friends and family.

FUTURE FERTILIZER APPLICATION INTENTIONS

Among the 10 best management practices provided, the majority of respondents expressed they intended to follow four specifically. These practices include reading the fertilizer label to make sure the right amount is applied (69.6%), preventing misapplication of fertilizer on paved surfaces (67.3%), watering-in fertilizer after application (64.8%) and selecting slow-release fertilizer products (58.3%).

