

Fertilizer ban prevents nutrient pollution in waterways

By Hector Flores

Please be aware fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorous may not be used on residential or commercial turf or landscape plants in Charlotte County between June 1 and Sept. 30.

During the summer rainy season, unnecessary fertilizing and improper fertilizer application can result in runoff that sends nutrients into waterways where they feed harmful aquatic algae.

Charlotte County Water Quality Manager Brandon Moody said in an interview with WGCU radio that the algal growth enabled by excessive nutrients “can cause a reduction in oxygen in the water that can make it difficult for fish and other organisms that need oxygen to survive. It can block out sunlight, which seagrass needs to be able to grow and thrive. So, it’s important for us to do our part to maintain the balance, which is really what it’s all about in ecosystems like Charlotte Harbor. It’s about balance.”

People often think complex environmental issues are beyond their control. This is one way everyone can play a role in reducing nutrient runoff.

For information about healthy fertilizer practices, visit <https://tinyurl.com/fertilizertips>.

Hurricane season

June 1 also marked the beginning of the hurricane season and right on cue two tropical systems flared up near Florida. The one we kept our eyes on was borne from a hurricane that made landfall in Mexico and then moved across the gulf to South Florida (per forecasts as I write this Wednesday evening). A second disturbance off the east coast of Florida moved away from the state with minimal development.

This time of year, tropical weather, plus severe thunderstorms capable of producing hail, damaging winds and even tornadoes, should always be on the top of our minds. Residents should have an emergency plan in place and police their property for material (vegetative debris, lawn furniture, gardening accessories, etc.) that could become wind-borne hazards.

As Emergency Management Director Patrick Fuller wrote in last week’s county column, there are numerous planning and information tools available online:

- Disaster Guide: www.charlottecountyfl.gov/EM
- Alert Charlotte notifications: www.charlottecountyfl.gov/alertcharlotte
- Know Your Zone: www.charlottecountyfl.gov/knowyourzone

The full column is posted to the county website. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov, then click Administration, then click Publications.

You also can read Patrick’s complete preparedness column in our latest Weekly Update, which was delivered to recipients on Wednesday. If you already subscribe, check your inbox. If you want to receive the Weekly Update, simply email Social Media Manager Ashley Turner at Ashley.Turner@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.

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