



MY YARD MY SPRINGS

Winter "no grow" season: Plan for your Florida-friendly yard.

Spring: If you're going to use fertilizer, use at least 50% slow release.

Summer restricted period: Skip the fertilizer during the summer.

Fall: If you're going to use fertilizer, use at least 50% slow release.

Winter "no grow" season: Plan for your Florida-friendly yard.

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL

AUG

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC

February 2, 2021: World Wetlands Day.

March 3 2021: World Wildlife Day.

March 20, 2021: Spring Equinox (start of spring).

April: Florida Springs Protection Awareness Month.

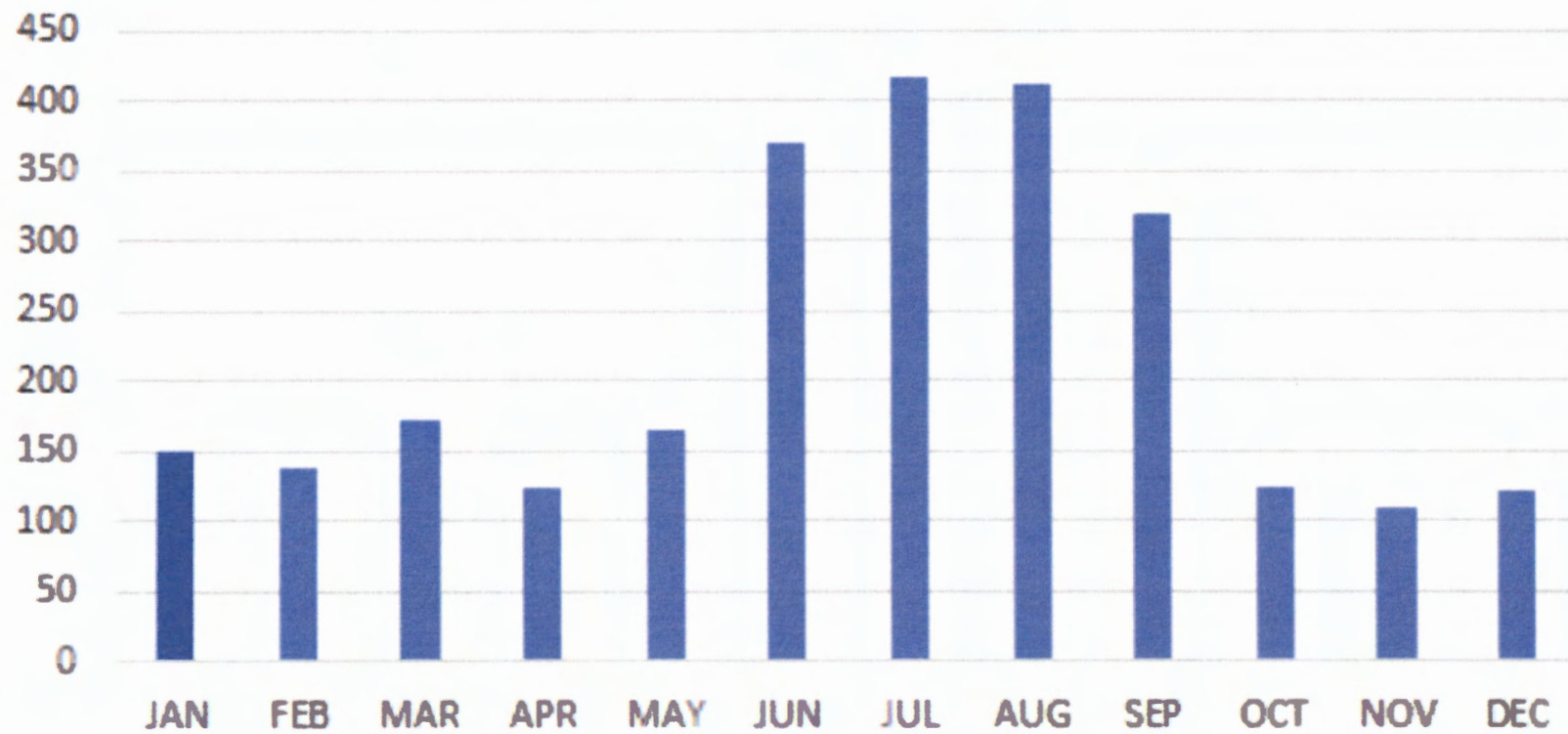
April 22: Earth Day.

June 1: Beginning of Orange County fertilizer ordinance restricted period.

June 20: Summer Solstice (start of summer).

August 1: Start of Simplify Your Week day.

Total Monthly Rainfall by Month for Hernando County, Florida from 1975-2024 (inches)



Source: Howard Diamond, PhD., Director, Atmospheric Sciences and Modeling Division at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Resources Laboratory.



FERTILIZE WISE

Excessive Nitrogen and Phosphorus from landscape fertilizers enter our waterways and can lead to excess algae blooms and sometimes fish kills. See how YOU can help protect our water while maintaining a great lawn!

**ALWAYS
CHOOSE**



AT LEAST
65%

SLOW-RELEASE
NITROGEN (N)

**ALWAYS
SWEEP
UP**



FERTILIZER
ON PAVEMENT

**ALWAYS
CHOOSE**



29 - 0 - 4
N - P - K

ZERO
PHOSPHORUS (P)

**DO NOT
FERTILIZE**



24 HOURS
BEFORE RAIN

**DO NOT
FERTILIZE**



WITH
NITROGEN OR
PHOSPHORUS



JUNE
TO
SEPT*

**DO NOT
FERTILIZE**



WITHIN 15'
OF ANY
WATER BODY

***SCAN TO SEE THE BEST
BLENDS FOR EVERY SEASON**



To learn more about the Seminole County
Fertilizer Ordinance,
visit Fertilizeflorida.com



Keep the bay blue, not green
Skip the fertilizer this summer

GIVE YOUR FERTILIZER ROUTINE A SUMMER VACATION

FOLLOW LEE COUNTY ORDINANCE 08-08
JUNE 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30

fertilizesmart.com



DOING YOUR PART TO PRESERVE OUR WATER QUALITY IS AS SIMPLE AS DOING LESS YARDWORK!

During the rainy summer season, unnecessary fertilizing and improper fertilizer application can result in run off that sends nutrients meant to feed your lawn into our waterways where they feed harmful aquatic algae instead.

JUNE 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30 – LEE COUNTY ORDINANCE 08-08

Take a break from using phosphorus and nitrogen formulas and minimize your fertilizer use to help protect our waterways, our quality of life and our economy.

See more ways to help prevent algae at
fertilizesmart.com



A message from your
Lee Board of County Commissioners



31096-I-0006

A large, moss-covered monster with a long, pointed tongue and a menacing expression is the central figure. It is holding a yellow sign with black text. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a cave or a night scene.

DON'T FEED THE MONSTER!

Over-fertilizing and run off have created a monster in our local waterways,
causing algae blooms, fish kills and other unintended consequences.

To learn how you can do your
part and keep the monster at bay,
visit FertilizeSmart.com

fertilize smart

Herald-Tribune

NEWS

The fertilizer industry insider who's credited with helping Sarasota Bay

Josh Salman

May 9, 2016, 12:01 a.m. ET

Michael Juchnowicz has been called a traitor, a deserter and a double-crosser by his peers. He thinks of himself more as a maverick.

It has been nearly a decade since the founder of Gardenmasters of S.W. Florida Inc. broke with the fertilizer industry by pushing for stricter nitrogen-control laws — a proposal many fertilization services believed at the time to be a threat to their industry.

He testified before legislators, welcomed county commissioners into his private headquarters and worked with university researchers — fighting the powerful lobbyists his own industry had hired.

But now that restrictions have been in place for several years — banning the use of fertilizer in Sarasota and Manatee counties from June 1 through Sept. 30 — Juchnowicz says he has an established system, while many others are still scrambling to keep their lawns green during the peak summer months.

“Why go against it,” said Juchnowicz, a pilot and classic car collector. “Figure out a way to work it. It took years for us to develop a program — a new way of doing it.”

Gardenmasters now is the largest lawn and garden fertilization company based in Southwest Florida, with a 15,000-square-foot warehouse in Venice and a satellite office in Naples.

With customers from Apollo Beach to Marco Island, Gardenmasters services nearly 20,000 accounts and grosses millions in annual revenues.

The company has 45 trucks and almost 50 employees. It put down more than 1 million pounds of fertilizer last month alone.

Founded in 1997, the company also does outdoor and indoor pest control.

The way it was

For decades, companies that provide services like Gardermasters would fertilize heavily during the summer to help combat the heat.

But environmentalists began leading a campaign to change that in the early 2000s, when scientists showed that applying fertilizer during the rainy season can cause nitrogen and phosphorous runoff, even from what are considered to be more inland neighborhoods, to pollute the water.

"There's not one single measure that will correct the systemic problems that have happened over decades," said Jon Thaxton, a former Sarasota County Commissioner who championed the ordinance. "The fertilizer ordinance is a critical tool. The bay's recovery -- and the reduction of nitrogen -- has been remarkable."

The fertilizer industry fought hard to prevent change.

Juchnowicz was one of the few in the business to rebel against his peers, citing the importance of clean water.

A better balance

He began experimenting with using fewer products — a method used to maintain golf courses on tighter budgets — and eventually he found the right balance that complies with the new regulations.

The company now uses a slow-release product line that it says is a "custom blend mixture that is environmentally friendly and compliant."

It is lower in phosphate and nitrogen than the products more commonly seen before the new regulations, but Juchnowicz says it is just as effective. He also cut down on his use of insecticides.

"It's like seatbelts," he said of the fertilizer guidelines. "I remember when they first came out — nobody wanted to wear them. Now, I won't get in a car without it."

Juchnowicz says he just felt that testifying in favor of tighter guidelines was the right thing to do, even if it meant he'd be blacklisted in his own business community.

"I have a son, and he doesn't have any kids yet, but he will someday," Juchnowicz said. "This is making a difference."

Sarasota County took a leading role on fertilizer reforms, passing its own ordinance in 2007. Manatee County joined with a similar initiative in 2011.

The local ordinances include numerous provisions. For example, lawn-chemical businesses are required to use "best management practices" when applying fertilizers. Grass clippings are to be kept out of storm drains; fertilizer spilled on impervious surfaces must be cleaned up so it does not wash into rivers and estuaries.

Areas very close to waterways must be kept free of fertilizers year-round.

"Now, the whole state is pretty much doing it," said Dean Calamaras, a former Venice mayor who now works for Gardenmasters.

Experts say the new rules have made a difference for the better, and that Juchnowicz's role was crucial to the initiative.

"He was the best kind of spokesman," said Jack Merriam, who is now retired but worked as Sarasota County's environmental manager at the time the ordinance was passed. "He would sit at the industry table, and you would hear rumblings that he should be sitting with the environmentalists.

"We have more sea-grass now than we did in 1950, a benchmark, good year. The bay is doing better, we know that."

A staff of experts

Gardenmasters works with all varieties of turf and plants. The company has a full-time horticulturist and chemist on staff.

For basic lawn fertilization, for a property in a typical middle-class neighborhood, Gardensmasters charges about \$480 a year.

That includes monthly visits, with different services each time aimed to build stronger turf. During the summer, when fertilizer cannot be applied, the company focuses on turf inspections, weed control and plant treatments.

The company has cared for the lawns of a \$20 million home and helped the grass come to life at the 80-acre Premier Sports Campus in Lakewood Ranch, Juchnowicz said.

The company says it helped spot a potential problem with spiraling whitefly — a species that's been destroying plant life across Southwest Florida — before university scientists.

"Each month we do something different," Calamaras said. "We are always looking at ways to improve the turf."