

Residential Activities can Impact Water Quality – Be a Good Neighbor to Our Lakes

Whether we live on a waterfront property or several blocks away, the activities we do in and around our homes have a direct impact on water quality in our lakes. Windermere's lakes are an anchor recreational boaters and anglers, provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, and influence property values for our community.

Many people are not aware that the most significant pollutants are nutrients – nitrogen and phosphorus – which come from fertilizers, detergents, and organic debris that wash into our lakes. Leaves, clippings, and dirt/dust generated during landscaping activities can have a real and immediate effect on surrounding waterbodies. Excessive nutrient pollution leads to reduced water quality and clarity and increases the frequency and intensity of algae blooms.

There are a variety of ways we can reduce pollution to make a difference and protect water quality in Windermere.

Everyone:

- Bag leaves and grass clippings and use in flowerbeds or compost it to create nutrient-rich topsoil.
- Use a mulch setting on your lawnmower → Reduce the need for fertilizer by setting the mower to 'mulch' grass clippings and return these nutrients to your lawn.
- Follow chemical labels for use and disposal on household products.
- Rake oak leaves and use as mulch in flowerbeds and landscaping. Leaves are less likely to grow fungi and won't attract termites like wood mulch does.
- Wash vehicles on grass and use phosphorus-free detergent.
- Pet waste should be bagged and disposed in garbage.
- Remove items from curb areas so stormwater maintenance vehicles can operate easily.
- Construct a berm and swale to reduce runoff and prevent erosion.
- Use phosphorus-free fertilizer.
- Use fertilizer sparingly and sweep up any fertilizer that lands on hard surface.
- Secure bare dirt on construction sites with proper erosion control measures.
- Use shade-tolerant grass or groundcover under tree canopies.
- Avoid blowing leaves and grass into the street or onto pavement.
- Plant bare spots with native plants to secure dirt and prevent it from washing into storm drains and lakes.

For Waterfront Properties:

- Fill in bare spots on shoreline with native aquatic plants.
- Maintain a planted shoreline.
- NO NEED to fertilize lawn if irrigating from the lake.
- Plant a variety of native aquatic species and heights of plants.
- Prevent grass clippings and landscape debris from washing into the lake.

- Place compost bins far from shoreline to prevent nutrient pollution from washing into the lake
- Use floating aquatic plant debris that washes on shore as mulch in flowerbeds.
- Prohibit fertilizer applications within 15' of shoreline.

Before you fertilize, make sure to refer to Orange County's Fertilizer Ordinance →
<https://www.orangecountyfl.net/Environment/FertilizeResponsibly.aspx#.YWdDNS-B30o>

*October outreach submitted to Town of Windermere
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