



🌿 **Natural Lawn, Tree & Shrub Care Alternatives for Florida**

A Clean Green Guide

This guide is designed to support the elimination **of toxic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides** in Florida lawn care—protecting waterways, wildlife, pets, children, and community health. These safe, effective methods are recommended for homeowners, landscapers, municipalities, schools, and park systems.

🌱 **Common Florida Grass Types & Natural Fertilizer Options**

1. St. Augustine Grass • Best Fertilizer:

- Fish Emulsion Spray: Mix 1 tablespoon of fish emulsion with 1 gallon of water. Spray on lawn monthly during growing season.
- Compost Tea: Brew compost tea by steeping 2 cups of mature compost in a 5-gallon bucket of water for 24–48 hours. Strain and apply.
- Seaweed-Based Fertilizer: Mix 1 tablespoon liquid seaweed into 1 gallon of water. Apply every 2–3 weeks during growing season.
- Soil Amendment:
- Alfalfa Meal: Spread 10–20 lbs per 1,000 sq ft and water in.
- Worm Castings: Apply a 1/4-inch layer over lawn in early spring.
- Weed Prevention:

- Corn Gluten Meal: Apply 20 lbs per 1,000 sq ft in spring and fall as a pre-emergent weed suppressant.

2. Bahia Grass • Best Fertilizer:

- Molasses Spray: Mix 1/4 cup molasses with 1 gallon of water. Apply using hose-end or pump sprayer.
- Composted Manure: Spread 1/2 inch layer of well-aged cow or horse manure in early spring. • Soil Amendment:
- Biochar: Mix biochar with compost (1:1 ratio) and apply at 10–15 lbs per 1,000 sq ft.
- Pelletized Chicken Litter: Use a non-synthetic option at 5 lbs per 1,000 sq ft. Water in well. • Weed Prevention:
- Vinegar Spray: Combine 1 gallon vinegar with 1 tablespoon citrus oil and a few drops of natural dish soap. Spray weeds directly.
- Mulch Edges: Use untreated wood chips around lawn edges and trees.

3. Zoysia Grass • Best Fertilizer:

- Liquid Kelp: Mix 1 tablespoon liquid kelp per gallon of water. Apply monthly.
- Humic Acid Blends: Use per package directions for improving nutrient uptake and root development. • Soil Amendment:
- Organic Top Dressing: Mix sandy loam with compost (1:1) and apply 1/4–1/2 inch across lawn in spring. • Weed Prevention:

- **Thick Growth & Aeration:** Dethatch in spring, aerate once per year, and topdress after to smother weed seeds.



Natural Weed Control Methods

(Safe for Waterfronts, Parks, & Schools)

- **Boiling Water** – Carefully pour over weeds in cracks and hardscapes. Best for driveways and sidewalks.
- **Vinegar & Citrus Oil Spray** – Mix 1 gallon of white vinegar with 1 tablespoon of citrus oil (like orange oil). Add a few drops of natural dish soap. Apply on a dry, sunny day using a garden sprayer.
- **Corn Gluten Meal** – Apply 20 lbs per 1,000 sq ft to lawns as a pre-emergent weed control. Water lightly after applying.
- **Flame Weeder Tool** – A propane-powered tool used to flash heat weeds. Only recommended for professionals or trained users.
- **Mulching with Cardboard or Newspaper** – Lay 1–2 layers of cardboard or 5–10 sheets of newspaper around plant beds, then cover with wood chips or compost.



Natural Pest Control by Plant or Problem

Problem / Pest Natural Solution

Aphids: Mix 1 tablespoon neem oil + 1/2 teaspoon castile soap in 1 quart of water. Spray directly on infested areas. Repeat every 5–7 days.

Grubs: Apply milky spore powder once and water in. For quicker results, use beneficial nematodes (follow packaging for hose-end sprayer application).

Fire Ants: Pour 2–3 gallons of boiling water directly into the mound. Repeat as needed. Alternatively, mix 2 tablespoons orange oil with 1 gallon water and pour.

Mosquitoes (landscape): Scatter cedar mulch in shady areas. Plant lavender, citronella, and lemon balm. Eliminate standing water.

Fungal Lawn Spots: Mix 4 tablespoons baking soda + 1 gallon water and spray affected areas. Compost tea sprayed weekly also strengthens immunity.

Leaf-chewing insects: Blend 2 cloves garlic, 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, and 1 quart water. Strain and spray. BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) can also be applied per label.

Tree & Shrub Care Without Chemicals

- **Citrus Trees:** Mix 1 tablespoon neem oil and 1/2 teaspoon castile soap into 1 quart of water. Spray on leaves every 7–10 days to deter mites and aphids.

- **Palm Trees:** Fertilize with organic greensand and kelp meal—apply 1/2 cup per tree base and water in thoroughly. Repeat every 8–10 weeks during growing season.

- **Native Trees:** Apply 1–2 inches of leaf mulch around the base, keeping it away from the trunk. Add a 1-inch layer of compost on top each spring.

- **Avoid Synthetic Iron & Nitrogen Boosters:** Instead, mix 2 tablespoons of chelated sea minerals into 1 gallon of water and apply monthly as a foliar or root soak.



Organic Lawn & Tree Partners in Florida

- **UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping**

Program: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu>

- **Earth's Ally (non-toxic garden sprays):** <https://earthsally.com>

- **Soil Food Web School (Soil health experts):** <https://www.soilfoodweb.com>

- **Grower's Secret Organic Fertilizers:**

<https://www.growerssecret.com>



Ban These Common Products

📌 Citing Local Precedent: City of Naples, FL In 2020, the City of Naples passed Ordinance No. 2020-14584: Which restricts the use of glyphosate-based herbicides like Roundup on all city-owned properties to protect water quality in local waterways and the Gulf of Mexico. This move was supported by environmental advocates and public health officials due to the mounting evidence linking glyphosate to ecological harm and human health risks.

Naples also provides educational outreach and encourages residents and contractors to adopt non-toxic landscape maintenance practices. Their ordinance has become a model for other Florida communities aiming to reduce harmful runoff and preserve marine and freshwater ecosystems.

Reference: Naples Roundup Ban - Official Ordinance 2020-14584 (PDF)


These are toxic to humans, pets, wildlife, coral reefs, and waterways:

- **Roundup (glyphosate)** • 2,4-D (used in many weed & feed combos)
- **Atrazine (common lawn herbicide in Florida)** • Synthetic nitrogen fertilizers (especially near canals & ocean)
- **Neonics** (neonicotinoids – harmful to bees)

What's Next?


This document can be used to propose:

- County ordinances restricting toxic lawn products
- School board and parks department natural care programs
- Mandatory signage for lawn care businesses
- Fine structures for non-compliance
- Certification for natural lawn companies

 **Let's restore Florida's soil, air, and water**
one green yard at a time.

 **Want to make a bigger impact?**

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Chief Eco Officer,

