



## Apply Landscape Compost and Fertilizer *after* Rain

The rainy season in San Diego County is October through May each year. Oceanside residents are fortunate enough to have warm sunny days after it rains. This allows gardening and landscape maintenance to be done year-round. Some maintenance activities, such as fertilizer application, can cause problems to our local environment when not done properly. Your help is needed to protect the environment while also maintaining beautiful landscapes.

**When applying fertilizer, apply after it rains, not before it rains.** Many people have said that when the weather report states that rain is coming, they apply fertilizer to their landscapes. Their thought is that the rain will push the fertilizer into the soil providing nutrients to the roots of the plants which uptake the fertilizer. But, this is far from the truth. If fertilizer is applied the day before a rain event, the plants may not have enough time to absorb the fertilizer before the rain washes it down the storm drain system and into our rivers, creeks and ocean water.



Excessive fertilizer that reaches our waterways can be a cause of algae blooms in local lagoons and sloughs (pronounced sloos) like Buena Vista Lagoon and Loma Alta Slough (near Buccaneer Beach). Algae, during its decomposition process, deplete the oxygen levels in the waterways, negatively impacting the wildlife that live there.

The best way for plants to uptake nutrients and to ensure that fertilizer is not washed off is to apply fertilizer one to two days after it rains. If the manufacturer directions state to water the plants after applying the fertilizer to prevent plant burning or other issues, then use your own water system – not the rain. You can do this by hand watering or using your in-ground irrigation system as long as no water runs off your property and enters the curb and gutter.

A better alternative to chemical fertilizers is the use of compost products. Oceanside residents can obtain free compost products from the El Corazon Compost Facility located off of Oceanside Boulevard. Did you know that Oceanside’s green waste material collected from residential landscapes is hauled to the El Corazon Compost facility? Agri-service, the company that operates the



compost facility, turns that green waste into humic compost, composted mulch and compost tea. These compost and mulch products improve soil and reduce the need for fertilizer and pesticides, and helps prevent polluted runoff when

properly applied. Oceanside residents can obtain free compost products for use in their landscapes during designated facility hours. More information can be found [here](#).

### **A quick summary of tips for proper fertilizer and compost application:**

1. When applying fertilizer, apply it after it rains, not before.
2. Get free compost from El Corazon instead of purchasing synthetic fertilizers.
3. And, if you have a landscape contractor that takes care of your landscape, please share this information with them.

You can prevent our lagoons and sloughs from growing excessive algae by applying fertilizer after it rains and, better yet, improve the soil and health of your plants by using compost products. You can learn more tips about environmental protection by logging on to [www.GreenOceanside.org](http://www.GreenOceanside.org).