

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Green Industries Best Management Practices: Education for the Protection of Florida's Waters and Natural Resources

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Abstract. The sustainability and protection of Floridas natural resources in the urban landscape is an important issue facing landscape maintenance providers. The Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) Training Program is mandatory by Florida statute for those applying fertilizer commercially in the urban landscape. The GI-BMP Program is administered by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Nonpoint Source Management Section (NPSMS) and implemented by the UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Program. The program has trained/certified over 30,000 industry professionals. The training is taught by Extension Agents and Green Industry volunteers. A combined 1,340 training classes have been provided in English, Spanish or Haitian Creole. Three training options are available: in-person, online and DVD. Classes are held at Extension offices and other locations around the state. The training consists of six GI-BMP learning modules covering: efficient use of water and fertilizer, integrated pest management (IPM), fertilizer application, and lawn and landscape cultural practices to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Passing rates for in-person training are: English 92%; Spanish 80%; Haitian Creole 72%. Knowledge gain results (18% average) are based on pre- and post-test scores. An end-of-training evaluation is given to in-person participants: 17,612 (84%) out of 21,026 indicated a willingness to adopt BMPs; 3,035 (14%) indicated they Already Do use the BMPs. 16,840 (79%) out of 21,302 responding said, "I will" use the recommended fertilization rates and methods presented in the BMP manual; 19% indicated they "Already Do".

Annual follow-up survey results indicate at least 10 BMPs adopted based on before and after questions.