



# little bugs club



## Indian River Lagoon

### Protecting Our Ecosystems

Many of us live on or near the Indian River Lagoon. It provides us with water, fun activities like kayaking and boating, and a safe habitat for many animals. As we enter the summer months, we are also entering the rainy season in Florida. With the increase in precipitation, there is a greater amount of runoff that enters the lagoon. In order to protect this ecosystem, Brevard County enacts a fertilizer ban during the months of June-September. Take a look below to learn about what this means and how it helps protect our beautiful lagoon.



### Fertilizer Impact

A fertilizer is defined as a mixture of chemicals and natural substances that increases the productivity of plants. Many fertilizers are sold as granular products that release nutrients slowly over time. However, during heavy rain, the released nutrients don't have time to seep into the ground but are washed away into streams and rivers. This addition of nutrients can lead to an algae bloom - a situation where there is so much algae growth that it removes all the available oxygen from the water. The loss of oxygen can make it difficult for other plants and animals to breathe and can damage large amounts of aquatic habitat.



### What is a Ban?

A Ban is a rule or law that prohibits/stops an action or the use of an item under specific circumstances. If used correctly, a ban can protect people or the environment from dangerous activities and materials. The Brevard County fertilizer ban prohibits the use of granular fertilizers during the rainy months and is used to protect the lagoon from the input of excess nutrients which can harm native plants and wildlife.



### How you can help

Wondering what you can do to help support a healthy ecosystem? Here are a few ideas:

- Use rain barrels - decreases the amount of runoff into the lagoon
- Compost instead of fertilizing - decreases the amount of harmful nutrients entering the lagoon and gives your plants a good boost at the same time
- Plant natives - native plants are great because they require less water and fertilization than other plants

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<https://rockledgegardens.com/little-bugs-club/>

Take a look below for a fun rain-themed craft!



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### Make your own Rain Gauge!

One way to keep track of the rainy season this summer is by making your own rain gauge! This container will collect water over time and tell you how much rain we have received. You could even start a nature journal and record changes in rainfall from week to week! To help increase the stability of your rain gauge, you can place a small layer of rocks or sand in the bottom. You can keep your rain gauge simple in design or can decorate with markers/sharpies, paint, or cotton balls for clouds!



#### Materials Needed:

- Glass jar or plastic, 2-liter bottle
- Scissors and tape (if using plastic bottle)
- Ruler
- Sharpie
- Small amount of rocks/sand
- Decorating materials

#### Instructions:

- If using a plastic bottle, first have an adult cut off the top at the start of the widest point and set aside
- Create a small layer of rocks/sand at the bottom and fill your container with water until the layer is covered
- Place a ruler along the side of the bottle so that the base is level with the top of your rock/sand layer
- Draw a vertical line up your container and use the ruler to mark measurements up the side of your container (you can make measurements in inches, centimeters, or both!)
- If using a plastic bottle, grab the cut-off top, remove the cap, and place upside down inside your bottle to act as a funnel for water.
  - Tape the sides around the top to secure it in place.
- Decorate your container and place outside to collect water during the next rainstorm!

