

Roundup weed killer ban: Indian River County is latest to stop using glyphosate herbicide

Indian River County has stopped spraying glyphosate, a chemical believed to cause cancer and possibly algae blooms, at 40 parks and the Sandridge Golf Course.

The county switched from glyphosate, the herbicide most commonly sold as Roundup, to environmentally friendly methods as of Oct. 1, Public Works Director Richard Szpyrka told the County Commission Tuesday. Alternatives include:

- Goats
- Mechanical methods
- Tribune, a nonvolatile herbicide
- A combination of salt, vinegar and dish soap

Scroll down for other Treasure Coast municipalities' glyphostate policies.

The state's agriculture department suggested the latter method, which is effective about 50-60% of the time, Szpyrka said.

"In 2019, we purchased 80 gallons of glyphosate and used 55 gallons before we stopped using it at all," Szpyrka said. "We subsequently got rid of what was left safely. We do not use Roundup anymore."

The county's subcontractors also are prohibited from using glyphosate products.

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Osprey Acres Park

The county has been testing the salt, vinegar and dish soap alternative at its newest recreational park, which opened Oct. 30.

"We're still playing with it, but we were concerned with using chemicals in the area of Osprey Acres Park and we're trying natural ingredients to get rid of the weeds," Szpyrka said. "It doesn't get the vines, but it's working pretty good."

More: [Park has walking trails and filters stormwater to lagoon](#)

The county uses mechanical methods to remove weeds from canals and Tribune to kill weeds that sprout under guardrails.

"We are trying to get the word out that we don't do the mass spraying

anymore," Szpyrka said. "We purchase equipment that allows us to reach across the canals and also remove the vegetation from the canals."



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Dan Lamson, executive director of the Indian River Neighborhood Association, walks a trail in the nearly 84-acre Osprey Acres Stormwater Park & Nature Preserve, which was slated for 400 homes until Indian River County bought the land. (Photo: PATRICK DOVE/TCPALM)

Glyphosate is still used in small quantities to control invasive plants on conservation lands, manager Beth Powell said. On the 2,600-acres of conservation lands in the county, 47 gallons of glyphosate was sprayed last year.

More: [FWC should make glyphosate ban permanent](#)

Powell is also testing the use of a 10-goat herd to eat Brazilian peppers and other non-native plants in a small area.

"The goats help us reduce the amount of herbicides we have to use on

conservation lands," she said.

Roundup roundup

Here are other Treasure Coast municipalities' policies on glyphosate aka Roundup:

TCPalm environment reporter Tyler Treadway contributed to this report.