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**Released By: Wendy Rose**

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## **Lawn Equipment Thefts**

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office is investigating a rash of lawn equipment thefts that has taken place over the last three months in unincorporated areas of Sarasota County.

There have been nineteen reported thefts of lawn equipment, including twelve where trailers containing equipment were taken and seven cases where thieves stole only the lawn equipment. Most thefts are occurring late at night or in the early morning hours.

Investigators have identified a connection between Sarasota and Hillsborough Counties based on the recovery location of abandoned trailers and vehicles related to the case. Information is being shared with other law enforcement agencies and detectives are attempting to identify suspects.

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office urges lawn care and maintenance companies to be vigilant and take extra precautions in securing equipment. Patrol deputies are on a heightened level of awareness regarding such thefts and will be conducting late night stops of vehicle and trailers suspected of being involved in such thefts. We are asking that members of the community report any related suspicious activity.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call Criminal Investigations at 941-861-4900 or leave an anonymous tip with Crime Stoppers by calling 941-366-TIPS (8477), or online at [www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com](http://www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com) or via text message by texting TIP109 plus a message to CRIMES (274637).