



Fertilizing

New research shows that lawns need less fertilizer.

Follow these tips to get great results at a lower cost to you and our environment.

Do a soil test

- You don't know what your lawn needs without one!

Fertilizer basics

- Unless you have a soil test that identifies a need for phosphorus and potassium, all you need is nitrogen. Look for 10-0-0 on the bag (corn meal gluten is a good choice).
- For free fertilizer, always return the clippings to your lawn.
- If an unfertilized lawn is acceptable, then don't fertilize!

Older lawns - 10⁺ yrs old

- Lawns older than 10 years need only clippings.
- If fertilization is deemed necessary, start with 1/3 of the amount recommended on the bag label, monitor the lawn, and apply more *only if the lawn needs it*. Don't apply more than 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet.

New lawns - under 10 yrs old

- Younger lawns need nitrogen.
- Start with 1/3 of the amount recommended on the bag, monitor the lawn and apply more *only if the lawn needs it* up to a total of 2 pounds per 1000 square feet.

When should I fertilize?

- **The best time to fertilize** is between August 15th and September 15th.
- Grass needs to be growing to take up fertilizer.

Use slow release organic fertilizer

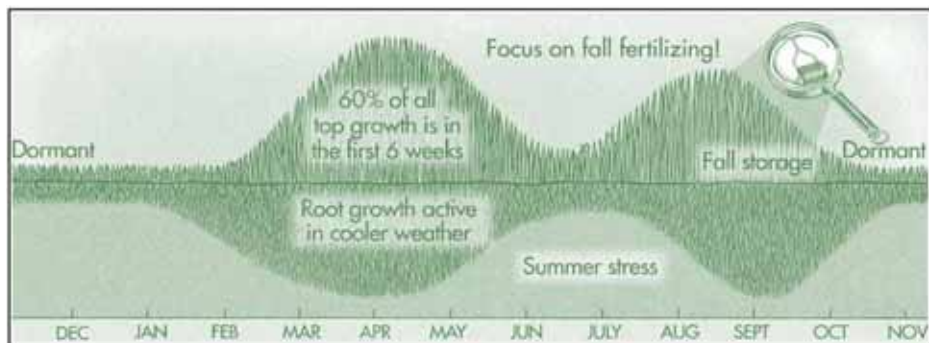
- Improves soil health and fertility.
- Slowly releases nutrients so they feed your lawn, not our streams, rivers and groundwater.
- Most come from sustainable, renewable resources.
- Look for corn meal gluten, a byproduct from milling corn. It's a great source of Nitrogen for your lawn!

Notes on synthetic fertilizers

- Derived from natural gas, a nonrenewable resource.
- Many contain soluble nitrogen that can wash into rivers and streams, wasting your time and money.
- If you do use synthetic fertilizer, look for slow release nitrogen. Using slow release nitrogen helps ensure that your lawn's root system takes in the nutrients before they wash away.

Other tips

- Try compost tea!
- Choose grasses such as fescues that require less nutrient and water inputs.
- Check out our Overseeding & Compost Tea fact sheets!



Graphic adapted from *Lawn Care Without Pesticides* by Frank Rossi. (<http://hdl.handle.net/1813/3574>)

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