

Selecting the Correct Fertilizer Program for Your Florida Lawn

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For more information on fertilization or other gardening issues, please contact the Citrus County Extension office at (352) 527-5700, or stop by the Master Gardener Volunteers plant clinic consultation desk Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. I will also be holding a class called “Fertilizer Basics” at the Extension office on Thursday, March 24th from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Class is \$5.00. Pre-registration and payment are required. We are located in the Lecanto government complex at 3650 W. Sovereign Path, Ste.1, Lecanto, FL, 34461.

Did you know that each variety of turfgrass has its own recommended annual amount of nitrogen and other nutrients that it needs to survive? University of Florida research has identified the different amount of fertilizer needed for many of the grasses common in our area, including Bahia, St. Augustine, Zoysia, and Centipedegrass.



You may ask, why is applying the correct amount of fertilizer to my lawn important? A good fertilizer program should ensure that not too much or too little fertilizer is being applied to a landscape. Proper fertilizer application has several advantages for your lawn and the environment. Your turf needs a certain amount of nutrients, sunlight, and water to grow. Besides having a better looking yard, lawns that are fertilized at the correct rate are healthier and produce a more extensive root system than unhealthy turf, making it less prone to the effects of disease and insects, as well as increasing cold and drought tolerance. Turf with a healthy root system is also able to take in more nutrients, reducing the amounts of fertilizer that may leach through the soil.

Research shows that applying nitrogen, phosphorous and other fertilizers above recommended rates can make the lawn stressed by forcing too much leaf growth and not storing

enough nutrients in the roots for overwintering of warm season turf, as well as increasing the thatch layer. Improper applications of nitrogen (especially quick release nitrogen) and phosphorous, can also lead to these nutrients leaching past the root zone and into our waterways, adding to the growth of algae and bacteria. Over fertilization can also increase the chances of disease and insects attacking your lawn, which in turn may increase the need for additional fungicide or pesticide applications, adding extra expense when taking care of your lawn.

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