

## **Fertility Guidelines for Lawns**

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It's the time of year that our lawns begin to wake up from their long winter nap and I know that many of you are ready to get them started off on the right foot this year.

A good fertilizer program is necessary for a healthy, attractive lawn, however it must be combined with correct mowing, irrigation and pest control practices for best results. This type of program includes the correct type and amount of fertilizer applied as well as applying it at the right time.

I've included a table with general guidelines you can go by when fertilizing this year in the absence of a soil test. I emphasize this is only a general recommendation and the only way to know what your soil really needs is to pull a soil sample.

Environmental conditions such as rainfall, soil type and shade also affect fertilization practices. Lawns receiving high rainfall or irrigation will need more nitrogen. Moderately to heavily shaded areas should receive only one-half as much fertilizer as areas in full sunlight.

An additional fertilizer application per year will be needed if grass clippings are removed during mowing. This is required because the clippings contain plant nutrients that would otherwise be recycled into the soil.

Remember the following points when applying fertilizer:

- Fertilize when the grass leaves are dry to reduce the possibility of leaf burn.
- Water the fertilizer in thoroughly after application (1/4 inch of water).
- Use a mechanical spreader and apply the fertilizer evenly. Divide the fertilizer in two equal parts and spread in two directions at right angles to each other.

Lastly, remember that excess nitrogen will increase stem and leaf growth, which means more mowing. It also increases water requirements, thatch formation, and possibly insect and disease problems.

On a yearly basis turfgrass nitrogen requirements per 1000 square feet are as follows: Centipede – 0-2 lbs., Zoysia – 1-2 lbs, and Bermuda – 2-5 lbs.

If you have any questions or would like a complete copy of the University of Georgia publication on *Fertilization for Lawns* please give me a call, 862-5496 or go online at <http://pubs.caes.uga.edu/caespubs/pubcd/B710.htm>

## Fertilizer and Lime Suggestions for Established Lawns

Grass Species	Fertilization						Lime Requirements
	Optimum Maintenance			Low Maintenance			
	Analysis***	Rate - lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.	Time of Application	Analysis	Rate - lbs. per 1,000 sq.ft.	Time of Application	Rate - lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. Time of Application
Hybrid Bermudas	16-4-8	6	Early spring* and at monthly intervals**	16-4-8	6	Early spring* and every 8 weeks**	30-50 Any time during growing season
Common Bermuda, St. Augustine & Zoysia	16-4-8	6	Early spring* and at 8-week intervals**	16-4-8	6	Early spring* and again in mid-summer	15-25 Any time during growing season
Fescue & Bluegrass	16-4-8	6	Early fall and Early spring*	16-4-8	10	Early fall and Early spring*	20-30 Any time during growing season
Centipede	12-4-8	5 5	After spring greenup and again in mid-summer	Fertilize every other year			

\* "Early spring" refers to the time when the grass begins to turn green and grow again.

\*\* These applications should be made during the growing season with the last application being applied 30 to 45 days before the normal first killing frost.

\*\*\* Example fertilizer grades.