

Get the Facts about Fertilizer

The Canadian Fertilizer Institute's 4Rs for a Greener World

Just like all living things, plants need the proper balance of nutrients to grow and stay healthy. Fertilizer ensures your lawn has all the nutrients, in the proper amounts, it needs to grow. Using fertilizer is simple, but it's important to do so properly. By following a few simple steps, not only will you have a lawn that looks and feels great, but you will be contributing to a greener world.

To fertilize properly and achieve the benefits of a thick healthy lawn, homeowners and turf management professionals should follow the 4Rs of fertilizer use: the Right Source at the Right Rate, the Right Time and the Right Place.



Did you know?

A 50-by-50-foot lawn releases enough oxygen for a family of four, while an average 18-hole golf course releases enough oxygen for 4,000 to 7,000 people.

Right Source

Buy the right fertilizer for your lawn. Review your options at your local lawn and garden centre by reading the bag or testing your soil (this can be done by a professional or with a home kit). The three numbers on the bag (such as 10-0-5) indicate the ratio of three key nutrients included in all fertilizers: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, listed in this order. Meaning, if a bag reads 21-4-3 it contains 21 per cent nitrogen, four per cent phosphorus and three per cent potassium.

- **Nitrogen:** Boosts growth and green colour
- **Phosphorus:** Feeds seedlings and stimulates new root growth
- **Potassium:** Provides all around vigour and health and strengthens resistance to disease and stress

Did you know?

The air purification that green spaces provide is especially important in urban areas where asthma and other breathing disorders are more prevalent. In fact, 12 million tons of dust, soil and other air pollutants are trapped by green space every year.

Right Rate

Know the size of your lawn, buy only what you need, follow the instructions on the bag, and remember that more is not always better. Use a good quality lawn fertilizer spreader to distribute fertilizer evenly across your lawn.

Properly maintained and calibrated spreaders are designed to deliver an accurate amount of fertilizer evenly across the entire lawn. Uneven application can cause variations in lawn colour and potential burning if over-applied, so never spread fertilizer by hand. If storage space is an issue, consider a handheld model for smaller lawns.

And don't be intimidated by your spreader. They are not difficult to use and all the steps for proper application are outlined on your fertilizer product bag.



Did you know?

Healthy turf has a dramatic cooling effect, acts as a water filtration system, reduces water run-off, and is a significant source of oxygen.

Right Time

Feed your lawn every other month beginning in April. A lawn fed three to four times a year develops a deep root system to resist heat, drought and wear. It also develops thick green top growth to naturally resist weeds, disease and insects.

Canadian holidays are an easy way to remember the best times to feed your lawn. Think Mother's and Father's Day, Labour Day and Thanksgiving.

In the spring, green means go. As the rain returns and the ground warms, watch for your lawn to begin to green. Feed your lawn promptly to encourage deeper root growth and provide a healthy foundation for the growing season ahead. Avoid applying fertilizer before a heavy rain is expected.

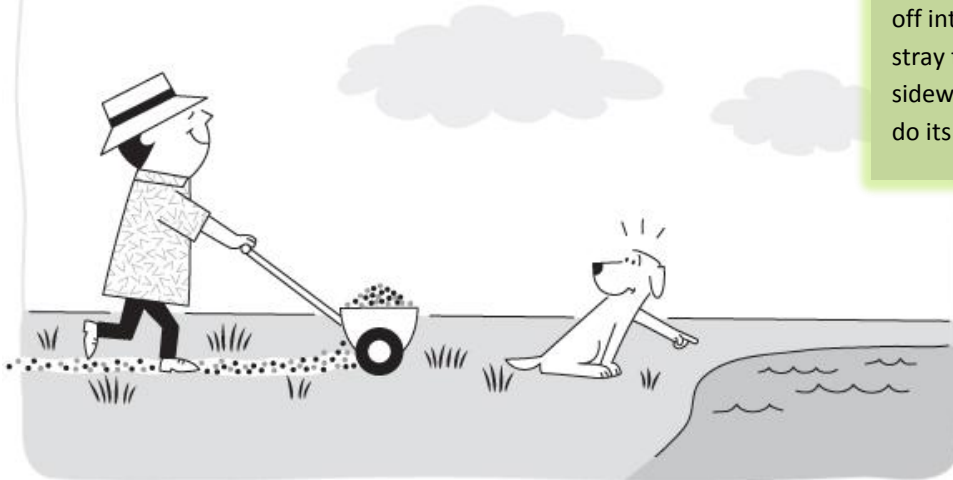


Did you know?

Lawns dramatically cool the air compared to hard surfaces. Healthy lawns, trees and shrubs can reduce air temperature around a home by 4°C to 8°C.

Right Place

Because too much phosphorus in the water can promote algae growth, homeowners who live near a pond, lake or stream should select a phosphorus-free fertilizer. You should also prevent fertilizer from running off into sewers. After fertilizing, sweep any stray fertilizer on driveways, patios and sidewalks back on to your lawn where it can do its job.



Leftover Fertilizer?

If you are left with extra fertilizer at the end of the season you can use it, share it or store it.

Store any leftover fertilizer sealed in its original container in a dry place for use next season. Share by giving it to a neighbour, a relative or donate it to a community group.



For additional information please visit www.GreenerWorld.ca or email us at info@cfi.ca