

Soil Testing

ANALYZE BEFORE YOU FERTILIZE

DID YOU KNOW?

You may be wasting time and money by adding unnecessary nutrients to your yard. Do a soil test first and learn what your lawn really needs.

Why Soil Test?

- ? Many lawns have sufficient nutrients (such as phosphorus) already and do not need these nutrients added through a fertilizer.
- ? Soil tests supply information about the nutrients in your soil and can tell you when applications are no longer needed
- ? Soil tests can prevent overfertilizing which can save money and protect area waters by limiting excess nutrients in runoff

For more information, contact your local UW-Extension office

What Are the Numbers on a Fertilizer Bag?

Nitrogen - the first number

Nitrogen is used to stimulate new leafy growth, color and overall health

Phosphate - the middle number

Phosphorus helps develop the root system

Potassium - the last number

Potassium promotes stem growth and overall health



Are you a Smart Shopper?

If you use a lawn care company, be sure to communicate about your lawn's needs. A soil test is the best way to know what your lawn needs and to avoid adding unnecessary nutrients. Discuss the soil test results with your lawn service provider.

Fertilizing After Your Soil Test

- | Read your soil test results for fertilizing and maintenance recommendations
- | Avoid weed and feed products (supplying excess chemicals)
- | Select fertilizers where at least 25%- 50% of the nitrogen is in slow release form
- | Be sure to calibrate your spreader correctly (for more information <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/A2306.pdf>)
- | Avoid applying fertilizer to non-grass areas (sidewalks, driveways)
- | Sweep up any excess fertilizer and put back on the lawn or dispose of properly

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Grass Clippings

DID YOU KNOW?

Grass clippings contain phosphorus, the nutrient that turns lakes green with algae. One bushel of fresh grass clippings can contain 0.1 lbs of phosphorus - enough to produce 30 - 50 pounds of algae growth if it finds its way to a lake or river!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Leave grass clippings on the lawn

Direct grass clippings away from streets, driveways, sidewalks and other paved areas

Sweep up grass clippings and return them to the lawn

Set the lawn mower at a higher setting (over 2.5 inches) letting shorter blades fall back onto the lawn as natural fertilizer

Sharpen mower blades every 1-3 years

Mow when your lawn needs it, not on a fixed schedule

Mix grass clippings with leaves and soil to make a backyard compost pile



Yuck! - algae as a result from too much phosphorus in the lake

Why?

- Grass clippings are composed of 85% water!
- With grass recycling, use of fertilizers can be reduced by 30-40% or more!
- Lawns mowed higher are more competitive against weeds.
- Lawns mowed higher withstand heat stress better, need less watering, and are more resilient, reducing bare spots and soil erosion.
- Leaving grass clippings in place leaves the equivalent of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 ft² - the same amount you would get from 1 fertilizer application

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