



H BAR H TURF FARMS Fertilizing

Serving the Texas Panhandle at Amarillo and Idalou!

Fertilizing is required to meet today's standards of turf appearance. It is essential that soil nutrients are maintained at proper levels. This process begins at the initial stage of turf installation and continues as a maintenance program throughout the life of the turf.

Fertilizers are literally plant food additives. Very few soils are fertile enough to supply the nutrients which healthy plants need, thus we fertilize.

Most fertilizers contain varying amounts of the three essential plant foods: Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P) and Potassium (K). On the label of fertilizer bags, the elements are listed in the order given above. A bag of fertilizer listed as 10-15-20, for example would contain 10% Nitrogen (N), 15% Phosphorous (P) and 20% Potassium (K).

Lawn fertilizers vary in analysis and price. The price of the fertilizer relates somewhat to the analysis and the nutrient carriers used on the fertilizer. Low cost fertilizers are usually water soluble thus have a high potential to burn the grass, and provide nutrients for a short period of time 1-2 weeks. More expensive fertilizers are not water-soluble, have low burn potential and provide nutrients for up to 8 weeks.

The goal of any fertilization program is to provide the lawn with the nutrients it needs for optimum growth. The most accurate way to find out those needs is to have the soil tested. Soil test services and information are generally available through your Local County Extension office. If a soil test is not conducted, follow these general fertilization guidelines.

Fertilize when the turf is growing!

Cool season lawns such as Triple Crown Bluegrass and Frontier Fescue will need to be fed in early fall, (September), late fall (November) and spring (March). Three applications are preferable but two would be a minimum.

Warm Season lawns, Hybrid Bermudagrass will need to be fed regularly beginning when lawns are 50% green (April-May depending on your area) and at 30 day intervals until August 15th. Three to four applications can be made depending on the quality of turf you prefer to maintain.

Fertilize with a balanced product!

Most lawn experts agree that Fertilizers with a ratio of 3-2-1 of, (N) Nitrogen-(P) Phosphorous-(K) Potassium are acceptable for use on any lawn. Examples of these rates may be 16-8-8, or 15-10-5.

The experts also agree that the fertilizer should have at least one-half of its N (Nitrogen) in a slowly soluble/slow release form, i.e.: natural organic, sulfur-coated, or resin coated. Lawns fertilized with one of these slow-release forms tend to have better color, thickness, and reduced leaf growth.

Fertilize on a schedule!

Meet the nutrient requirements of your turfgrass on a regular basis. A schedule of three times each year will assure that your turf is healthy, can withstand stress and compete with weeds and disease.

Fertilize properly!

Apply fertilizer with a spreader that is in good working order. Do not fill spreader while it is on the lawn, spilling will cause a burn. Begin applying the fertilizer by making "header" strips around the border of the lawn. Start at one edge and go back and forth across the lawn evenly, turning off the spreader when the header is reached. Do not turn the spreader while fertilizer is dropping through to the grass.

Fertilize according to your lawn!

Each and every lawn is unique, according to the soil, environmental conditions, turf variety and use. If your lawn experiences heavy traffic or your soil is relatively sandy, has poor drainage or low plant density, you may need to fertilize at a lower rate, but more frequently.

Fertilize on a supplemental basis to correct color or appearance!

Iron - If you are providing a regular feeding for your turfgrass (three balanced applications per year) and do not have the color or leaf luster you desire, you may be short of micronutrients, specifically iron. In the southwest plains area we do experience iron chlorosis and an application of an iron product can assist in the color and health of your lawn. A chelated iron generally in liquid form can be applied to any variety of turfgrass any time of year. This product is specifically recommended for cool season varieties that need a boost in the summer. There are also granular iron products readily available.

Gypsum - As a rule our pH in the southwest Plains is a bit high and can also tie up nutrients so that they are not available to the plant. An annual application of gypsum, generally in the fall, of 50 lbs. per 1000 square feet will help your lawn stay healthy by lowering the pH, and making nutrients readily available.

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