

Do I really need to fertilize?

If you want to maintain a healthy, green lawn, then it is almost certainly a necessity that you keep it well fertilized. Grass is almost like a person; it needs food, water, and protection in order to survive and be healthy. However, there are so many different types of fertilizer out there; you may ask, how do I know what to buy? Should I use a regular fertilizer, or organic? Granular or liquid? And what do those three numbers that are always on the package mean?

Those magical numbers

For starters, let's discuss the three numbers. These represent the three essential ingredients that grass needs to stay healthy—nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium.

Nitrogen—This ingredient of fertilizer gives your grass that bright, vibrant green color. It also helps it to grow thick and sturdy, allowing it to naturally fight off insects and other pests, as well as just look great.

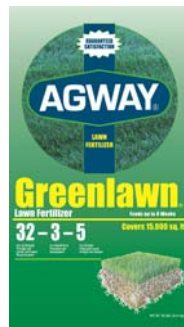
Phosphorous—This ingredient works under the surface of your lawn to encourage good root growth.

Potassium—Also called potash, this ingredient toughens up the roots and foliage of your grass, helping to make it more resistant to drought, wear and tear, disease, and cold weather.

So, when you see a bag of fertilizer that has those three magical numbers, such as 32-3-5, you will know that the first number represents the percentage of nitrogen, the second number phosphorous, and the third potassium. There are different combinations of these numbers for different types of fertilizer; for instance, a fertilizer high in phosphorous will generally be used as a starter fertilizer, whereas one high in potassium is good for preparing your lawn for winter.

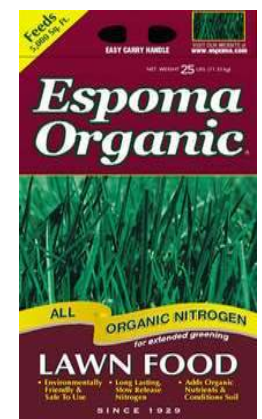
Should I use granular or liquid?

The next thing to consider is if you should use granular or liquid fertilizer. Granular is definitely the more popular variety, as liquid fertilizer is more fast-acting and requires more applications to maintain the health of your lawn. Liquid fertilizer may be easier to handle than granular, however, since you won't have to carry around a 40 or 50 pound bag; instead, you just hook the liquid up to a hose-end sprayer and water your lawn with it. As always, cost is something to consider as well. Since you will probably have to purchase more of a liquid fertilizer to get the same results as a granular, it will probably cost more money in the long run than using a granular fertilizer.



Should I use regular fertilizer, or organic?

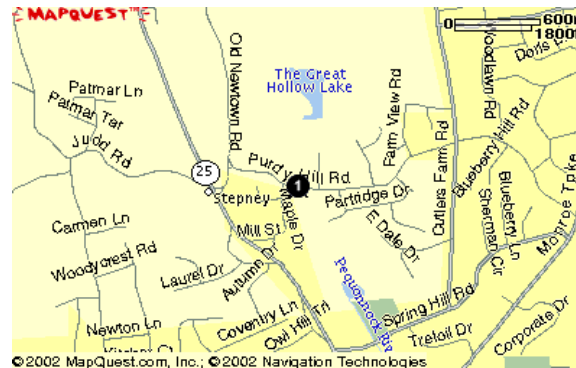
Finally, a very popular question these days is whether to use a regular fertilizer or organic. Note that there is a difference between a “regular” fertilizer and synthetic—synthetic fertilizers are chemically manufactured, whereas “regular” fertilizers use naturally occurring minerals to do their jobs. Regular fertilizers are almost always cheaper than using organic, but they can run the risk of burning your lawn if used improperly—you should **always** read all the directions on your bag of fertilizer before applying it! Organic fertilizers tend to be expensive, and can sometimes smell as they are made with once-living organisms and their bi-products. However, they are a great, slow-releasing source of nitrogen that can make your lawn look great.



Notes

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480 Purdy Hill Road
Monroe, CT 06468
Phone: (203) 268.2537
Fax: (203) 261.1224
Email: info@benedictsgarden.com

