

The Hoe Truth Newsletter

Helping You Dig Up Gardening Ideas

HORTICULTURE

Lawn Fertilization

Fertilizing your lawn is a good way to maintain a healthy turf. You should fertilize every year. Fertilizing your lawn helps maintain a uniform, dense, green, turf and reduces weed problems. The good effects of fertilizing can be lost if you fertilize at the wrong time. Low maintenance turf requires one application of fertilization in late October or anytime in November for most grass types.

Don't guess what your lawn needs! Get a soil test done. This can be done through the extension office. The cost is \$5.00 and we have literature on hand to show you how to take the sample. With a soil sample a good recommendation can be made on how much lime, phosphate, and potash your lawn will need. You should have your soil tested every few years.

Soil tests measure several important elements, however it doesn't measure nitrogen. Turf is highly dependant on nitrogen but applying it at the wrong time of year can severely damage it. As a general rule you should apply 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet of lawn. If you are using ammonium nitrate for your ni-

trogen source that would be 3 pounds per 1000 square feet. Never apply fertilizer when the grass is wet, it will increase the likelihood of burn.

The time of year to fertilize your lawn is dependant on the types of grasses you are growing. Fall

and early winter is the best time to apply nitrogen fertilizer to cool season grasses such as fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and ryegrass. Most lawns in Kentucky are made up of these grasses. By fertil-

izing cool season grasses in the fall they will develop better root systems, become very dense, and will have better fall and winter color. During mild winters the turf will maintain an even green color all winter.

By eliminating spring fertilization you will prevent a heavy flush of growth in the early spring, reduce the frequency of mowing during spring, develop a better root system, reduce disease, and develop a more heat-tolerant, and weed free turf.

Late spring-early summer is the best time to fertilize warm season grasses such as bermudagrass

and zoysiagrass. These grasses don't grow until it gets warm; therefore fall and winter fertilization would be useless. Warm season grasses have been used on several area athletic fields because they form a dense mat, however they turn brown after the first hard frost and stay that way until May of June.



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HORTICULTURE CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

October 6, Extension Council at the Extension Office 5:00 P.M.

October 8, Home-maker Area Meeting, Horticulture Program At Saint Catharine College, 1:00 P.M.

October 8, Master Gardener Class at the Washington County Extension Office 6:00 P.M.

October 9, Garden Club Trip to

Huber's Orchard, we will leave the Extension Office at 8:30 A.M., we will carpool and return by 5:00 P.M.

October 10, Master Gardener Trip to the UK Arboretum and South Farm. We will leave the Nelson County Extension Office at 9:00 A.M.

October 14, Extension Staff Meeting, out of the office.

October 15, Teen Leadership Agriculture Day.

October 19, Lincoln Trail Beekeepers Association St. Rose Social Hall at 6:30 P.M. Reverend Stephen Hayes will teach a class on making mead. All are welcomed to attend.

October 21, Out of the office.

October 20, Tree Planting at North Washington Elementary School

October 26-27 Horticulture Training, out of the office.



Control Spring Problems With Fall Cleanup

Did you know that preparations this year can greatly increase your chances of having a beautiful garden and harvest next year? The plant debris from vegetables, fruits, and flowers can over winter diseases and insects that can infest your plants next year. Proper garden sanitation can remove millions upon millions of disease causing spores, bacteria, and insect eggs and adults.

It is important to completely remove all plant parts from a vegetable and annual

garden and at least the tops of you perennial plants and old fruit from fruiting plants. This debris can be added to the compost, but make sure your compost gets really hot!

If your compost is like mine and most everyone else's it usually is just a pile of plant debris that doesn't get turned or even thought about unless you want something to amend your soil. If this is the case in your pile you need to

allow it to decompose several years before using it.

Each fall your gardens should be worked up well and a cover crop sown over your vegetable garden and a new layer of mulch added to annual and perennial gardens.

The cover crop and mulch will reduce soil erosion and compaction as well as (with the cover crop at least) keep nutrients near the surface where plant roots can get to it readily next year.



A Note From Dennis

Another growing season has almost come and gone and its time to start thinking about the future again. I am going to be putting together the spring Wheelbarrow Series in the next few months and am won-

dering what you all want and need in terms of classes. If anyone has ideas give me a call. I won't say I will use them but if I think they are a good idea I will run with it.

I actually have a lot of

fun deciding on topics and planning the spring classes. It helps me get through the cold dreary winter!

So send me your ideas by phone, email, or whatever.

Dennis Meyer

To Do's For October

Lawns

October through November is the best time to fertilize your lawn for a low maintenance approach. Apply no more than 1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. This would be about 4.5 pounds of ammonium nitrate or 3 pounds of urea. Don't apply phosphorus and potassium unless your soil test has determined you need it. There is no sense in wasting money on fertilizer that your soil and plants don't need.

Don't let leaves stay on your lawn very long it can smother it out. Its better to chop them up with the mower than to let them lay whole. Raking is the best option as well as a bagger on a lawn mower.

Flowers

Dig tender bulbs before or just after a very light frost. Plants such as cannas, elephant ear, gladiolus, caladium, dahlia, and calla lilies need to be dug to insure you have them next year. Often its not the freezing soil that kills them because usually the soil doesn't freeze deep enough to get them. Actually it's the cold wet soil that causes them to rot.

Gladiolus can actually be cured like an onion and stored in a cool dark place. Other bulbs such as caladium and dahlia do better if packed in dry peat or vermiculite in a

cardboard box. Store them in a cool dark dry place where the temperature remains above freezing.

Trees and Shrubs

October is still a good time to plant many trees and shrubs. Don't fertilize them when you plant them wait until colder weather in November or December.

Remember to keep newly planted trees and shrubs watered even after the leaves fall off. Their root systems are still growing and they need water. A tree that has a trunk 2 inches in diameter needs 15 gallons of water per week while a tree with 1 inch diameter trunk needs 10 gallons.

If you got a soil test done and you don't want to apply sulfur or lime to lower or raise your pH then you should choose plants that are tolerant to your particular soils. Arborvitae, alders, ash, bald cypress, hawthorn, hornbeam, juniper, honey locust, swamp white oak, London plane tree, willows, and redbud are all tolerant of high pH's or those above 7.

Dogwoods, most evergreens, some oaks, hollies, azaleas, and rhododendrons are tolerant or prefer pH's below 7 or even down to 4 or 5.

Vegetables

Harvest winter squash when the rind is hard. This means it is very difficult to penetrate it with your finger nail. Don't allow them to be exposed to frost, they won't keep as long. Store them in a cool place above freezing and out of direct sunlight.

Harvest pumpkin when they turn the color they are supposed to be meaning deep orange usually. Like winter squash the rind should be hard. Make sure to leave a portion of the stem attached to the pumpkin. This will help it keep longer.

In early October, sow sets of Egyptian tree or multiplier onions.

Harvest carrots before a heavy freeze.

Apply a fresh layer of mulch or leaves over the garden if you didn't sow a cover crop. This will protect your soil during the winter and add nutrients for next years crop.



Recipe of the Month-Sweet Potato Fries

- 1 – 1 1/2 lb sweet potatoes
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon (optional)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil (preferably the easy release kind).



Peel the sweet potatoes. Cut into strips that are about 1/2 inch wide on each side.

Place the sweet potatoes into a resealable plastic bag. Add oil, salt, paprika and cinnamon. Seal the bag and shake well to thoroughly coat the fries. Spread the potatoes out onto the baking sheet in a single layer.

Cook for 30 minutes, turning every 10 minutes, until slightly browned. Transfer immediately to a paper towel lined plate and serve warm. If you like your fries savory omit the cinnamon, if you like them sweet use the cinnamon and serve with a dipping sauce of honey or sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Plant of The Month-Sweet Potatoes

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes need a long growing time and medium to light sandy soils which are well-drained and relatively low in nitrogen. Excess nitrogen and heavy applications of fresh animal manures cause long, spindly roots of low quality. Heavy, tight soils cause misshaped roots.

There are two types of sweet potatoes—moist- and dry-flesh types. Moist-flesh or “yam” type is most popular. Root skin color varies from yellow to white for dry- or firm-flesh varieties, to bronze, red, pink and orange for moist types.

Plant Source

Most home gardeners buy transplants or “slips” from a local plant grower. If you are producing transplants, the potatoes should be bedded in a greenhouse or hotbed (75° to 80°F preferred) about five to six weeks before field setting date. Use only disease-free potatoes.

Ordinarily, 1/2 bushel will cover 8 to 10 square feet of bed surface and produce about 1000 transplants. The roots should be covered with 3 to 4 inches of sand and then watered down.

Planting

Shape rows into ridges about 10 inches high before planting. Space rows about 3

feet apart, and place plants in the row every 15 inches. Soil pH should be 5.2 to 6.7. Temperatures below 55°F can be detrimental.

A starter solution is recommended after plants are set. Add 1/4 pound of 20% nitrogen fertilizer to 5 gallons of water and use about 1 cup of this solution per plant.

Harvesting

Sweet potatoes can be harvested any time they reach a usable size. Sweet potatoes continue to grow until vines are killed by frost. You should harvest the crop when the greatest number of 6- to 8-ounce potatoes are found in the hill. Sample digging will provide this information. A good practice is to clip vines before frost occurs. The crop can then be harvested easily with less damage to potatoes. Plow or spade one row at a time and pick up potatoes. To reduce rotting in storage, be sure potatoes are clean, dry and free of injury.

Curing Storage

Stack crates or baskets in storage space. Place them 6 to 8 inches off the floor and 12 to 15 inches from the walls to allow for adequate ventilation. Curing requires 7 to 10 days if temperature can be maintained at 80° to 85°F with 70% to 90% relative humidity. After curing is complete, keep potatoes in a place as near 55°F as possible with relative humidity of 85%.

Long-term Storage

Sweet potatoes require moist air at 80° to 85°F for about ten days. The area under your furnace can provide these conditions if you cover the storage crates with a heavy cloth. Extend the curing period to two or three weeks if the temperature is under 75°F. Then move the potatoes to a relatively warm, dry location. See “Storing Vegetables” on page 30.

Diseases

Scurf (fungus)—Irregular purple-brown discolored areas on roots; color only skin deep but affects keeping quality of stored roots. Use only disease-free potato roots for bedding; cut plants above soil line and reroot plant cuttings into new soil. Dip transplants in a dilute bleach (1:5) solution before planting.

Insects

See pages 25-28 for descriptions of the insects listed. Refer to the footnote below for treatment options.

Insect	Treatment
Flea Beetles	3, 10, 11



Insect Treatments

1. Malathion 57% EC, 2. Carbaryl 50% WP (Sevin), 3. Pyrethrins, 4. Rotenone 1% D, 5. Cyfluthrin (Multi-Insect Killer), 6. Esfenvalerate 0425% EC (Bug-B-Gon), 7. Bacillus thuringiensis var kurstaki, 8. Bacillus thuringiensis var san diego, 9. Carbaryl 5% B (Sevin), 10. Insecticidal soap, 11. Neem