

## Still Time for Lawn Fertilization

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In our region, the ideal time to fertilize our cool season lawn grasses such as fescues or bluegrass is the fall.

Fertilizing in the fall allows for better growth of the grass and its root system which will create a healthier more resilient lawn all year round. It is recommended that two fertilizer applications occur in the fall; the first being made around October 15th and the second around November 15th. Even if you didn't fertilize in October, it's perfectly acceptable to do a November application of nitrogen at a rate of 1 lb. of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn.



Absent of a fertilizer test indicating a deficiency in phosphorous or potassium (potash) the recommendation is to apply only nitrogen. Nitrogen is applied at a rate of 1 lb. of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. "Actual nitrogen" references the fact that fertilizers are not 100% nitrogen or any other nutrient.

When looking at fertilizers, you'll most often see three numbers on the bag such as 10-11-12. Those three numbers refer to the percentage content of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium, respectively. In this fictional fertilizer example, the nitrogen content is 10%. To determine the pounds of 10-11-12 fertilizer that we need to apply, we divide the recommended rate (1.0 lb. actual nitrogen) by the percentage of nitrogen in the product as a decimal (0.10) so it looks like this:

$\frac{1 \text{ pound of actual nitrogen}}{0.10 \text{ nitrogen content fertilizer}} = 10 \text{ lbs. of 10-12-13 Fertilizer to provide 1 pound of nitrogen}$

For more information check out our publication [Fertilization & Management of Home Lawns](#)

### **How do I ask a question?**

If you have a question for the Master Gardeners, submit them to us on our website at [www.netmga.net](http://www.netmga.net). Click the link at the top of the page, "ASK A MASTER GARDENER" to send in your question. Questions that are not answered in this column will receive a response from a Master Gardener to the contact information you provide.

*The Master Gardener Program is offered by the University of Tennessee Extension. The purpose of the Master Gardener program is to train people as horticultural-educated volunteers. These volunteers work in partnership with the local Extension office in their counties to expand educational outreach, providing home gardeners with researched-based information.*