

Help the Chesapeake Bay

HG 65

Prevent pollution and reduce runoff with a healthy yard. Use care when gardening to protect your local water supply, streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake.

Control Erosion & Improve Your Soil

- Plant gardens in raised beds with solid sides.
- Recycle nutrients and improve soil by adding compost to your garden.
- Cover bare soil with leaves or cover crops during fall and winter.
- On slopes, plant along the contour, not up and down; construct terraces to hold your soil.

Garden Cover Crops

Seed in fall; mow and dig into the soil 2 weeks before spring planting. Try these:

- Oats
- Crimson Clover
- Winter Rye
- Winter Wheat

Lawn Fertilizer

- **Test your soil first!** Only fertilize based on your soil's needs. Re-test every 3-5 years.
- If phosphorus level in your soil is adequate, use a low- or no-phosphate fertilizer.
- Select fertilizer that contains at least 40% of its nitrogen in a slow release form.
- Do not over-fertilize.
- Keep fertilizer off of paved surfaces.
- Do not apply fertilizer to frozen ground or dormant turf or before a heavy rain.

Control Pests with IPM

- Check plants regularly for signs of problems. Look at leaf undersides for spider mites and egg masses.
- Avoid routine application of pesticides. Spot treat affected areas only rather than spraying the entire lawn and landscape.
- When necessary, use environmentally friendly pesticides like horticultural oils and soaps, botanical insecticides, biological controls, and beneficial insects.
- Hand pick insects and diseased leaves and pull weeds, when possible.

Mowing Guide

The proper mowing height reduces weeds by 50-80%!!!

	Spring & Summer	Fall & Winter
Tall fescue	2½ - 3½ inches	2½ inches
Kentucky bluegrass	2½ - 3½ inches	2 - 2½ inches
Fine fescue	2½ - 3½ inches	2 - 2½ inches
Bermudagrass	2½ - 3½ inches	1½ - 3½ inches
Zoysiagrass	2 - 3 inches	½ - 2 inches

Grasscycle! Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They return nutrients to your lawn and reduce the amount of fertilizer needed by 25-50%.

Keep mower blades sharp.

Watering

- In dry spells, allow an established lawn to go dormant.
- If turf looks blue-gray and you leave footprints after walking on it, water is needed.
- *Early morning* is the best time to water.
- Water slowly; wet to a depth of 4-6 inches.
- Avoid water run-off from the lawn.
- Light, frequent watering or watering in the evening can damage your lawn.
- Plant and maintain a landscape that will survive on natural rainfall amounts.

What we do matters!

Our landscapes are connected to the Chesapeake Bay by a network of storm drains, streams, and rivers.

HAVE A LAWN OR GARDEN QUESTION? CALL THE HOME & GARDEN INFORMATION CENTER!

1-800-342-2507

Consultants available Monday-Friday, 8 A.M. to 1 P.M. Recorded information available 24 hours a day.

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Fertilizer Facts

Fertilizer labels always display three numbers in the same order (i.e., 10-6-4). They represent the percent by weight of three important nutrients:

Nitrogen (N) - for green, leafy growth

Phosphorus (P) - for root, fruit, and flower development

Potassium (K) - promotes disease and drought tolerance

Example: A 40 lb. bag of 10-6-4 fertilizer has:
10% nitrogen (4 lbs.), 6% phosphate (2.4 lbs.), and 4% potash (1.6 lbs.)

Nitrogen Fertilizer Guide for Lawns

This chart shows when and how much fertilizer to apply to your lawn depending on the kind of grass you have. An * means that you should only apply fertilizer if your lawn has poor growth, density, or vigor; otherwise, skip these applications.

- Lawns need some nitrogen each year to remain dense and healthy, but many lawns will do fine with only 1 or 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet each year.
- In the fall, do not fertilize later than 6 weeks after the first frost in your area.

Pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.-Dec.	Mid-May/ Early June	July	Aug.	Max. Yearly
Tall fescue	1	1	.5	.5*	0	0	2½-3
Kentucky bluegrass	1	1	1*	.5-1*	0	0	3½-4
Fine fescue	0	1	.5-1	0	0	0	1½-2
Bermuda-grass	0	0	0	1	1	1*	2
Zoysia-grass	0	0	0	1	0-1*	0-1*	2

Calculating Square Feet

The first step in finding out how much fertilizer you need is to calculate the area of lawn. Once you know the area to be fertilized, you can figure out how many pounds of any type of fertilizer you need. See the calculation to the right. After buying the proper amount, check instructions and use the spreader settings recommended on the bag.

Length (L) = 70 feet

Width (W) = 25 feet

Formula: Area = Length X Width in Square Feet

(L) X (W) = 70 feet X 25 feet = 1,750 square feet

Fertilizer Rates

A typical lawn feeding is 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

Here are some common lawn fertilizer formulations and the amount of each needed for 1 lb. of nitrogen:

Numbers on fertilizer bag	Amount needed for 1 lb. of nitrogen*
6-2-0	17 lbs.
10-6-4	10 lbs.
14-3-6	7 lbs.
20-5-5	5 lbs.
26-3-4	4 lbs.
35-3-5	3 lbs.

*rounded to the nearest pound

For other formulations, follow this example using a fertilizer labeled 24-6-6:

Formula: $\frac{1}{\% \text{ nitrogen}} = \text{lbs. needed to fertilize 1,000 square feet}$

The first number in the formulation is the % of nitrogen: 24%

To find out how much total product it takes to get 1 lb. of nitrogen, divide the 1 lb. by 0.24

$$\frac{1 \text{ lb.}}{0.24} = 4.17 \text{ lbs}$$

This equals a little more than 4 pounds

From your calculation of square feet, if your lawn is 5,000 sq. ft., multiply 4 lbs. by 5. The result is 20. This means you would need a 20 pound bag of 24-6-6 to cover your lawn.

Slow Release Fertilizers

Use a fertilizer that contains at least 40% of its nitrogen in slow release form. Look for these terms on the fertilizer bag:

- water insoluble nitrogen (WIN)
- sulfur, resin, or polymer coated urea
- IBDU
- ureaformaldehyde

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