

LATE FALL LAWN FERTILIZING

Fertilizing the lawn late in the fall, just before the ground freezes solid, has many advantages. It helps to thicken weak or sparse lawns and strengthens them so they may better withstand the winter. Many of the nutrients provided will be available in the spring so that plants will green up slowly without a lot of top growth. Not only does this minimize mowing, but it also deters certain diseases such as fusarium blight, which is now called summer patch.

When fertilizing in the fall, be sure not to do it too early! If it is done before the grass stops growing, the fertilizer will promote a flush of new growth, which is likely to suffer winter damage. Fertilizing before the first or second week in November can increase susceptibility to disease problems.

Use a lawn fertilizer that contains a combination of fast release nitrogen and slow release nitrogen. The fast release will feed the lawn at once and during the autumn while the roots are still growing, whereas the slow release will be available in the early spring. Latest research indicates that it is not necessary to apply high amounts of phosphorous or potassium at this time unless a soil test has indicated a need for it.

It should be noted that residents of Ann Arbor and Pittsfield Township are required by city ordinances to use only lawn fertilizers that contain zero phosphorous, which is the middle number on the label.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

https://www.canr.msu.edu/lawn_garden/

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