



FERTILISING PARKS, LAWNS AND HOME GARDENS (New South Wales)

This Fact Sheet contains basic information on fertilising lawns and home gardens. It should be read in conjunction with the Fact Sheet on Fertilisers for Recreational Areas. A more detailed Agritopic is also available on this topic.

FLOWERS AND VEGETABLES

Soil Amelioration

If lime, dolomite or gypsum is required, it should be applied when the ground is worked up for the first time, and be thoroughly incorporated or worked into the soil. Ideally this should be done about three months before planting.

Basal Fertiliser

Prior to planting, apply a complete NPK fertiliser such as Incitec Pivot Complete Mix 1 at 5 kg/100 m² (50 g/m²), or Incitec Pivot Grower 11 at 3.5 kg/100 m² (35 g/m²), and incorporate thoroughly into the top 10 to 20 cm of soil. This can be done before on the same day as planting. Mixing the fertiliser into the soil minimizes the risk of fertiliser burn, which could occur if the roots of seedlings were to come into direct contact with high concentrations of fertiliser.

After Planting

About 3 - 4 weeks after planting, apply Incitec Pivot Granular Urea at 1 kg/100 m² (10 g/m²). Water in after application.

LAWNS

Establishing a New Lawn

Soil Amelioration

If lime, dolomite or gypsum is required, apply it when the ground is worked up for the first time, and thoroughly incorporate into the soil. Ideally this should be done about three months before planting.

Planting

In the days or last couple of weeks before planting or laying down turf, apply a complete NPK fertiliser such as Incitec Pivot Complete Mix 1 at 350 – 450 kg/ha (3.5 – 4.5 kg/100 m²) or Incitec Pivot Grower 11 at 250 - 300 kg/ha (2.5 – 3 kg/100 m²). Incorporate into the top 5 - 10 cm of soil.

Established Lawns

After establishment, a fertiliser with a higher nitrogen (N) and potassium (K) and lower phosphorus (P) content can be used.

For summer active lawn grasses such as Sir Walter, Buffalo and Couch, which grow faster during the warmer months of the year, apply either:

- Incitec Pivot No 17 lawn Food (S) at 400 - 500 kg/ha (4 – 5 kg/100 m²) per application; or
- Incitec Pivot Multigro or Nitrophoska Special at 300 - 400 kg/ha (3 - 4 kg/100 m²) per application.

The fertiliser can be applied at this rate three or four times a year, e.g. in September, December and March, with the interval between applications being extended during the winter months when growth is slowed.

The higher and more frequent rates are required where the lawn is watered throughout the year, and where grass clippings are collected and removed, and nutrients that would otherwise be recycled are lost.

It is best to water the fertiliser into the soil. Where possible, this should be done soon after fertilising and on the day of application. Fertiliser granules and dust that lodge on plant leaves may dissolve in overnight dew and burn the foliage.

Applying fertiliser when rain is forecast may avoid the need to water the fertiliser in, provided enough rain falls to wash the fertiliser from the foliage into the soil. 10 mm of rain in the one fall should be adequate for this to occur.

Light rain or showers will have the same effect as dew, enough to dissolve the fertiliser but not enough to wash it off the leaves and into the soil.

The risk of leaf burn is increased if fertiliser is applied to wet grass, causing the fertiliser to stick to rather than fall through the foliage, and no further rain is received.

TREES AND SHRUBS

The surface area around trees and shrubs can be fertilised in the same way as established lawns, using the same fertiliser at the same rates. Spread the fertiliser uniformly on the soil. Do not concentrate it in a small area. Avoid application around sensitive native plants.

FRUIT TREES

Apply Incitec Pivot Multigro or Nitrophoska Special three times per year, in August, November and March. Spread uniformly around the tree, applying the fertiliser no closer than 20 cm to the trunk out to a point 20 cm beyond the edge of the canopy.

- For small trees (less than 2 metres in diameter), apply 150 g/tree/application.

- For medium size trees (2 – 4 metres in diameter), apply 500 g/tree/application.
- For large trees (5 metres or more in diameter), apply 1.5 kg/tree/application.

Do not concentrate the fertiliser on a small area, as root burn can occur, particularly in those trees with shallow root systems.

PETS AND WILDLIFE

While the risk is slight, the ingestion of freshly-applied fertiliser may temporarily affect the health of grazing animals and wildlife, and in isolated incidents result in death. If practical, it is best to remove animals from areas being fertilised, and not to readmit them until after rain is received or irrigation applied, and regrowth occurs. This minimises the risk of direct ingestion of fertiliser, and nitrate poisoning of grazing animals from young regrowth.

NOTE

This Fact Sheet contains brief Use Directions only, which by necessity are of a general nature. Fertiliser programs may need to be varied depending on the plants being grown, the soil's fertility, and cultural practices. Avoid loss of fertiliser to waterways.

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Incitec Pivot Fertilisers (a business of Incitec Pivot Ltd ABN 42 004 080 264)
28 Freshwater Place
Southbank Vic 3006

Freecall 1800 009 832

www.incitecpivotfertilisers.com.au