

Pottawatomie County Horticulture Newsletter



Fertilizing Lawns

There are no two ways about it. Fertilizer is essential for good lawn growth. Depending on the type of grass, from three to five fertilizer applications should be made during the growing season, usually starting early May to September.

Lawn fertilizers vary in composition and price. The ideal composition for a lawn fertilizer is a 4-1-2 ratio of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, for example 20-5-10. However, most available lawn fertilizers will not have this exact ratio but will still give good results. The price of the fertilizer relates somewhat to the analysis and the nutrient carriers used on the fertilizer.

Cheap fertilizers are usually water soluble, thus, have a high potential to burn the grass. Water-soluble fertilizers will give a response for four to six weeks. Many of these fertilizers have disclaimers on the bag stating they will not burn the grass if the directions are followed. The directions usually state that the fertilizer must be watered-in immediately after spreading. Because these fertilizers are water-soluble they become available in the spring when temperatures are still cool.

More expensive fertilizers are not water-soluble, have low burn po-

tential, and give a response for up to eight weeks. These fertilizers rely on microorganisms in the soil to release the nutrients. Since the microorganisms are not active when the soil is cool, the fertilizers will not become available early in the spring. Where lawns are watered regularly, especially on sandy soil, the more expensive types of fertilizers should be used. Heavy watering will dissolve water-soluble fertilizer and flush it below the root zone of the grass plants.

Apply fertilizer with a fertilizer spreader. Spreading fertilizer by hand will always cause some spots to be over-fertilized and others to have none. When using a spreader, be sure to get complete coverage of the lawn. Any missed spots will appear quite yellow. Most lawn fertilizers are packaged so that the right amount of nutrients is applied per 1,000 square feet. Generally, about one pound of actual nitrogen is required at each fertilization (five pounds of 20-4-12 containing 20 percent nitrogen). As always, the best way to determine fertilizer needs are through a soil sample.

Do not fill the spreader when it is sitting on the lawn. Fertilizer spills are inevitable. Spilling water-soluble fertilizer causes a large dead spot that persists for weeks. Begin applying the fertilizer by making "header" strips around the border of the lawn. Then start at one edge and go back

and forth across the lawn. Make sure each strip overlaps the previous strip. Turn off the spreader when the header strip is reached. Do not turn the spreader while fertilizer is dropping through onto the grass. Such corners are over-fertilized and the grass could be burned.

Use caution when applying fertilizer combined with herbicide, especially with broadcast spreaders. These spreaders can throw the material into flowerbeds where the herbicide can injure desirable ornamental plants, or tree and shrub roots can pick these up from under lawns.



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Rose Black Spot

Black spot of rose, also known as leaf blotch, and leaf spot, is a disease caused by a fungus called *Diplocarpon rosae*. The optimal conditions for disease development are 75-85 F and high relative humidity. Infection may be greatest on leaves that remain wet for six hours or longer. Leaves and canes can become infected.

Leaf symptoms are roundish, black spots with fringed margins that can be up to 1/2 inch in diameter. The spots form on the upper sides of leaves. The tissue surrounding the spots turns yellow. Infected leaves may prematurely drop from the plant. Usually lower leaves are infected

first. Excessive leaf drop weakens the plant, predisposing it to other forms of injury such as those caused by temperature extremes.

Cane symptoms are blister-like, purple blotches that later turn black. The fungus probably will not kill the branches, but cane infections can be important in the pathogen's survival through the winter.

Management of black spot includes sound cultural practices such as raking fallen leaves and removing infected canes. Avoid wetting leaves when watering and maintain air circulation around the plants to promote drying. Several rose cultivars have good resistance against black spot. If a cultivar is not resis-

tant, fungicide applications may be necessary for disease control. Check with your local garden center for products labeled for black spot. Some varieties may require spraying every 7-10 days throughout the growing season, especially if the weather is cloudy, warm, and humid. Cover both sides of the leaves when spraying. If possible, alternate between different fungicides. It is important to read the label and follow application recommendations. Fungicide treatments are most effective when used in conjunction with good cultural practices.



TICKS IN OKLAHOMA

Evidence suggests that spring may finally be arriving in Oklahoma, and ticks are starting to become active. Although ticks can occasionally be found during the cold weather months, it is the spring that triggers their greatest activity.

Lone star ticks and American dog ticks are by far the most common ticks encountered in Oklahoma. Both of these species have similar life cycles and habits. There are four stages in their life cycle: the egg, larva, nymph, and adult. The larva, nymph, and adult stages must each obtain a bloodmeal from a separate host for the life cycle to continue. For this reason, they are often referred to as 3-host ticks. Although all stages can infest any warm-blooded animal if need be, they seem to have some preference in terms of the hosts they choose. Adult ticks commonly infest large and medium-sized animals such as dogs, deer, raccoons, and opossum. The larva and nymph stages may feed on these same hosts but prefer to infest smaller animals such as field mice, squirrels, and rabbits. All stages readily feed on humans if given the opportunity.

Because Lone star ticks and American dog ticks must be in areas of high humidity to survive, they are most commonly encountered in wooded or brushy areas, or in areas where there is tall grassy or weedy vegetation. These ticks are seldom a problem in well-clipped and well-maintained lawns, although they may be found in adjacent border areas if the habitat is suitable for their survival.

Controlling ticks in outdoor areas is extremely difficult. Although several insecticides are labeled for outdoor tick control, these products are usually not effective in eliminating large numbers of ticks for extended periods. Insecticide sprays applied to the edges of lawns, however, can be somewhat effective in minimizing tick movement into these areas.

The best approach when working or recreating in tick-infested areas is to use personal protection to avoid or minimize the likelihood of encountering ticks. Wearing long pants tucked into boots or socks and using tick repellents are effective ways of minimizing tick exposure. Careful inspection of all family members and pets after being in tick-infested areas is also important.

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The only recommended method for the removal of an attached tick is to grasp the tick just behind the point of attachment with a fine-point tweezers and then pull straight out using slow, steady pressure until the tick is dislodged. The bite area should then be washed and an antiseptic applied. The use of gasoline, fingernail polish remover, or a match or other hot object is not recommended and can actually cause more harm than good.



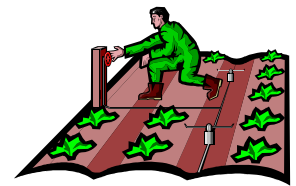
Lawn/Garden Care and Maintenance Program

The Multi-County Master Gardener Association and the OSU Cooperative Extension Service will conduct a "Lawn and Garden Care and Maintenance" seminar on **Wednesday, April 15th** beginning at **10:30 a.m.** We will meet at the OSU Extension

Center, 14001 Acme Road, Shawnee. We are located on the southeast corner of Acme Road and MacArthur.

Joe Benton, Agricultural Educator, will discuss irrigation, mulching, fertilization, weed control and other proper maintenance practices.

The program is free and the public is encouraged to attend.



OSU TOUR SCHEDULED

The Master Gardener Class of 2009 will take a tour of the gardens of 'Oklahoma Gardening' on **Thursday, June 18th**. We will leave from the County Extension Office at 9:00 a.m., returning to Shawnee around 3:30 p.m. You will need to have your own transportation or as in the past when you get here put together carpools. Lunch will be on your own. I have in the past invited others interested to attend the tour also. This is your invitation to this activity. Please call **273-7683** by June 16th to R.S.V.P., so we can have some idea of how many are going. Please leave your phone number. We have been rained out in the past and had to cancel.

Hope to see you on **June 18th!**

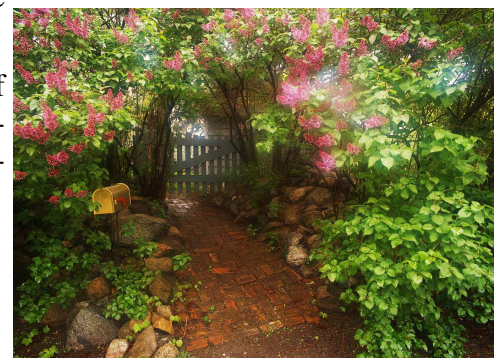
HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW??????????????

The OSU Extension Center will present a seminar, "**How Does Your Garden Grow?**" on **Monday, April 27 beginning at 6:30 p.m.** We will meet at the OSU Extension Center, 14001 Acme Road, Shawnee. The office is located on the southeast corner of Acme Road and MacArthur.

Attendees will hear a discussion on proper care and maintenance of gardens, vegetable and flower, lawns, tree and shrub care. Discussion items will include irrigation, fertilization, weed control, mulching and proper usage of fungicides.

The program is free and open to all that are interested.

Mark your calendar for April 27th! See you then.



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Oklahoma State University, U. S. Department of Agriculture, state and Local Government's cooperating. The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or status as a veteran and is an equal opportunity employer.

HOUSE PLANT CARE

As temperatures warm up in late , many home gardeners move houseplants to outdoor living areas such as porches, patios, and sunrooms. Most indoor plants can flourish outside if given proper attention.

First, have the patience to wait until temperatures are dependably warm. Most springhouseplant species originated in the tropics and are sensitive to temperatures below 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Be prepared to bring the plants back indoors on cool nights. Gradually acclimate the plants by moving them outdoors for a few hours daily before letting them spend full-time in their new digs.

Although a given plant may require full sun indoors, houseplants outdoors should receive no more than a half-day of morning sun. Afternoon sun will likely be too strong. Overexposing the tender leaves to the strong summer sun will result in sunburn, turning the leaves yellow or white and eventually brown. Most houseplants will do just fine in a shady northern exposure.

Another point to keep in mind is that plants outdoors are exposed to much greater wind which translates into watering more often to prevent the plants from wilting. Also, most plants will grow faster outdoors, which also contributes to a greater need for both water and fertilizer.

And don't be surprised if your plants drop considerable numbers of leaves when you bring them back indoors next fall. Many plants will drop their leaves in response to the drastic decrease in light indoors and then grow new leaves that are better acclimated to low light.

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