

Contact details

Lawns: Lawns need Wonder Lawns and Foliage Fertiliser 7:1:3 or slow release 3:2:1. These fertilisers have a high nitrogen content for greening up the foliage and phosphorus to strengthen the roots. As lawns do not need to flower, there is little potassium included.

Flowering and fruiting plants: Wonder Rose and Flower 8:1:5. This formulation contains high nitrogen for greening, a little phosphate, and large quantities of potassium to improve flowering, and as a result, fruiting.

General plants: Lawns and foliage fertiliser 7:1:3 contains high nitrogen for greening, a little phosphorus and slightly more potassium. Talborne Vita-Grow 2:3:2 (16) is also an ideal balanced fertiliser.

For details and further information, visit GardenShop's friendly Information Centre at any of our branches or call our Contact Centre on **0861 G-A-R-D-E-N (427336)**. Alternatively, e-mail us at info@gardenshop.co.za or log on to gardenshop.co.za.

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Fertilisers

GardenShop's guide to the use of Fertilisers and Plant Food

Why feed your garden?

All plants need nutrition in the form of fertiliser. These nutrients are essential for plant growth and flowering. Many plants are able to draw enough nutrient from the soil to survive, but often feeding can make the difference between simply surviving and flourishing! As rain and irrigation dissolve and flush away nutrients, periodic fertilising is needed.

When to feed your garden

Feeding should be carried out from spring into autumn. It is wasteful to feed anytime after late autumn as any new growth is destroyed in the winter and as winter sets in, the plants become dormant.

Always read the directions for use as these have been carefully researched to provide the ideal dosage for plants.

The 3 super nutrients

Each nutrient has a specific purpose for plants. The 3 most important are:

Nitrogen (N) is responsible for greening up plants. It leaches quickly but is plentiful in fertilisers, rain water (especially when there is lightning about) and compost.

Phosphorus (P) Phosphates are important for root and stem development. It is a nutrient that is often missing in our soils. It does not leach easily so it is best incorporated when planting. It is mostly wasted when applied on the soil surface.

Potassium (K) (sometimes referred to as potash) is important in flower production and in building the immune system.

There are several other nutrients that are needed in smaller quantities. These are called micro-nutrients and include iron, manganese, copper and aluminium.

Organic vs Chemical fertilisers

Inorganic (chemical) fertilisers do not contain carbon, while organic (natural) fertilisers do. Make no mistake, organic fertilisers are every bit as strong as their chemical equivalent and many is the generous gardener who has burned his plants! While chemical fertilisers act quickly, organic fertilisers are slower to be absorbed but have the benefit of improving the soil quality

Macro and Micro nutrient fertilisers

Today's market has fertilisers in number of combinations for various applications. There are 2 distinct groups. Those that contain the macro nutrients Nitrogen, Phosphate and

Potassium and those that contain both macro and micro nutrients.

The macro nutrient fertilisers always contain nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium but the ratio varies from product to product. Examples of these fertilisers are 2:3:2 (i.e. 2 parts nitrogen to 3 parts phosphorus to 2 parts potassium) and 3:2:1 (3 parts nitrogen to 2 parts phosphorus to 1 part potassium.) These fertilisers are used only 2 or 3 times a season.

The group that contains both macro and micro nutrients are like multivitamin supplements for plants, containing everything from nitrogen to iron and boron. Those supplements contain small amounts of nutrients and need to be applied regularly. Often these are tailor made for specific plants groups like roses, acid loving plants, ferns and African violets, but general feeds like Multifeed or Nitrosol can be used happily on everything.

What to feed and when

Planting: When planting new trees, shrubs, seedlings and lawns, use Wonder Super Phosphate and Talborne Vita-Grow 2:3:2 (16). Superphosphate is essential for the development of new and strong roots while the Talborne Vita-Grow 2:3:2 (16) are balanced fertilisers to assist in greening, stem and root growth and flowering.