



# FERTILISING GUIDE

## Fertilising your turf

A lawn will let you know when it needs extra nutrients. If it's not getting enough from your water and soil it will start to look sick or change colour to a lighter shade of green or even yellow in extreme circumstances. It simply won't be as vibrant and healthy as usual and even can appear patchy as well. Lawns have different needs during different seasons and fertilising is imperative for longevity, traffic wear and everyday health.

### After installation:

Either just before or just after installation, use a good quality starter fertiliser. Add an even application over the whole area as on the label. This will give the root structure the required nutrients to build and support the rest of the lawn. It's not imperative that you apply fertiliser on the installation day, but more importantly, during the first month of growth (a good guide is once you have started mowing).

### Once established:

- We recommend applying fertiliser at the beginning of spring and also in mid-autumn at a minimum.
  - Normally, early September is a safe time to apply the first of your growing season (spring and summer) applications.
  - In summer, avoid over-fertilising. Too much fertiliser can promote way more mowing than is required and even disease.
- The last fertiliser application before winter is important to how your lawn will perform over the winter down time. Try to watch the weather temperatures and make sure you give the last application just before it starts to cool down. 16 degree minimums and 25 degree maximums are about your last chance!
- Fertilise at other times of the year (usually 4-6 weeks) to maintain a thick and healthy lawn. Your local nursery or hardware should help you with your choice.
- Apply fertilisers at the recommended rates. Well-nourished lawns will flourish and will be strong and healthy to inhibit weeds and to fight off diseases.
- Hand spreaders are ideal for evenly distributing fertiliser.

**HOT TIP:** If you don't want to mow as much as normal then feel free to use the fertiliser in a half applications. This won't give you the same boost of colour but it won't give you the growth either.

Healthy, deep-rooted turf is more tolerant to stress, better retains its colour in winter, can out compete weeds and is more drought tolerant.

Immediately water in your fertiliser application well. This will ensure that the Nitrogen is making it into the soil.



## How do I know which fertiliser is right for me?

Choosing the right fertiliser can seem daunting for the first time. Those huge long isles that tower over head are full of different options.

With fertiliser, it isn't just about the price, whether it's organic or not, it comes down to the amount of key and [trace elements](#) and how they are being delivered to your lawn.

The three key elements to your lawn are [Nitrogen](#), [Phosphorus](#) and [Potassium](#). These three key elements are labelled on any reputable fertiliser packaging as the N:P:K ratio. Crop King 88 is a fertiliser used widely in agriculture for a range of crops. Crop King 88 is also known as CK88 and has a N:P:K ratio of 15:3:11. This means that CK88 has 15kgs of Nitrogen, 3kgs of Phosphorous and 11kgs of Potassium per 100kgs of CK88 product.

Turf grass uses a large amount of nitrogen every year to maintain strong and healthy leaf, you will find that a nice lawn will need around 1.8-2kgs/100m<sup>2</sup> every year of actual nitrogen. To apply this, it must be done in 6 small applications which are consistent over the growing season (eg in South east Queensland the growing season is September to April). This rate can change due to soil types, shade, lawn variety, mowing frequency and watering applications (please use as a general guide). You can work out what you have added each application by using the below guide.

The fertiliser packet you are using, for example, has an N:P:K ratio of 15:3:11 (Crop King 88). For a typical applications we recommend 200kgs/ Ha of fertiliser and therefore you are applying 30kg/Ha of actual Nitrogen.

$30\text{kg (over } 10,000\text{m}^2) / 1,000\text{m}^2 = 0.3\text{kgs}/100\text{m}^2$  per application of actual nitrogen. 6 applications a year at this rate would provide 1.8kg / 100m<sup>2</sup> of actual nitrogen.

Remember that these figures are based on regular sunlight, mowing and watering. If you are lacking any one of these inputs then please lower the application rates to suit your requirements.

Please Note:

When looking for a good starter fertiliser, look for a product that has elevated Phosphorus content. For example, an N:P:K of 18:10:9 is a great combination found in Ronstar plus starter fertiliser. A started fertiliser is generally only used to establish a new or recovering lawn.

A pre winter fertiliser is made to strengthen the root structure which will ensure that your lawn can weather the colder months. During the peak of winter frosts, the leaves of your lawn will go into dormancy and stop providing nutrients to the plants core. A strong root system will then be required to supply stored energy until the weather warms up again. A winter mix will generally be found to have a higher Potassium content. Another example is Scotts Turf Builder "Winterguard," which contains an N:P:K or 14:0:5.

When it comes down to Synthetic, Liquid and Organic fertilisers; only you will know best. A few things to remember when deciding:

1. If you have run out of time and winter is upon you, a good liquid fertiliser WILL activate faster than any other fertiliser option. Liquids are great when you need a quick "greenup" or a speedy response. Liquids generally do not last as long as synthetic or organic fertilisers.
2. There are two main differences with organic and synthetic fertilisers;
  - a. The first is that synthetic fertilisers generally will carry a higher amount of N:P:K which will give a better "bang for buck."
  - b. Secondly, the main difference between the organic and the synthetic is the fillers used to make up the rest of the fertiliser. The fillers in the organic fertilisers generally make the organic fertilisers slower to break down and the fillers can also smell. However, if you are worried about plant burn or the leaching of the chemical fertilisers then an organic can fit the bill.



## Slow Release Fertilisers

Slow Release fertilisers can be beneficial by releasing the nutrients over a longer period of time. This prevents flushes of growth and will keep your lawn looking greener and healthier for longer in between fertiliser applications. Slow release fertilisers have additives that prevent the granule from breaking down quickly and therefore you get the effect of feeding your grass a little bit over an extended period of time. Slow release fertilisers generally cost more than up front fertilisers.