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It's Time to Fertilize Cool Season Grasses

If you have Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue in your yard, it's time to give them your attention. While our current heat wave feels never ending, soon our days will shorten and temperatures will lower. As it does, our aptly named cool season grasses will enter their fall growth phase, spreading new shoots and roots.

In order for these grasses to truly thrive, they will need sufficient amounts of nutrients. Our hot summer has likely depleted the nutrients in your lawn, which makes September most important time of year to fertilize your cool season lawn.

When you purchase fertilizer, you will see a series of three numbers on the bag. The first number is nitrogen, which helps your grasses develop healthy root systems and recover from the stressful summer conditions. Most lawns will require regular nitrogen applications. We recommend applying 1 to 1.5 pounds of quick-release nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. It is a good idea to repeat this process in November. If there is no rain, make sure to water in the fertilizer yourself.

The second and third number on the bag, are phosphorus (P) and potassium (K), respectively. These nutrients contribute to overall growth and stress tolerance. In established lawns, you often have sufficient quantities of P and K, so there is no need to add these nutrients unless a soil test indicates the need. You can look for fertilizers with high nitrogen, such as 30-0-0 or 29-5-4 or 27-3-3.

When fertilizing, take care to read the instructions and apply fertilizer evenly across the lawn and the rate given on the packaging. When you are done fertilizing, sweep or blow any fertilizer or granular products off of your sidewalks and hard surfaces. This prevents the fertilizer from entering our water ways and protects our water quality.

If you have questions about the fertilizer you need, would like to do a soil test, or need guidance on applying fertilizer to your yard, reach out to our office for more information.