

GARDEN FERTILIZER FACT SHEET

FOR ROLLINSFORD RESIDENTS

How do I use fertilizer in a way that's safe for the environment?

- Only apply fertilizers when necessary.
- Get your soil tested! UNH Extension provides affordable soil testing.
- Slow-release fertilizers can be applied before planting, and that is the only application you need! Mix into the first 4-6 inches of soil.
- Avoid applying before windy or rainy days, so that fertilizers do not runoff into the environment.
- Apply fertilizers during times of maximum uptake for plants (in the Spring and Fall).
- Use yard waste such as leaves and grass clippings as mulch for your garden or incorporate into compost to prevent waste from washing into streams.
- Landscape using native plants to avoid the need for fertilizers and support native habitat.
- Using fresh manure for vegetable gardening is not recommended.

How do different types of fertilizer break down?

Fertilizer Type	Release Rate					Release Style			Notes
	Nitrogen	Phosphorous	Potassium	Lime	Sulfur	Slow	Medium	Rapid	
Alfalfa Meal	2.5%	-	2%	-	-		x		Full season supply
Bloodmeal	13%	1%	-	-	-			x	Full season supply or mid-season side dress
Bonemeal	3%	15%	-	-	-		x	x	N/A
Crab Meal	6%	3%	-	25%	-		x		Full season supply
Fish Meal	9%	6.5%	-	-	-		x	x	Mid-season or full season
Rock Phosphate	-	25%	-	-	-	x			Several years supply
Poultry Manure	≤3%	3%	2%	x	-			x	Full season supply, quick fix for N/P/lime
Woodash	-	2%	5%	x	-				Apply when P and lime are needed
Potassium Sulfate	-	-	50%	-	18%			x	Quick fix for potassium
Compost	1%	1%	1%	-	-	x*			Apply when organic matter is low
Cow/Horse Manure	<1%	.2%	.5%	-	-		x	x	N/A

Key: Slow release = over multiple years, medium release = over a few months, rapid release = several days to several weeks; N = nitrogen, P = phosphorous, K = potassium
 - = This element is not found in this fertilizer type * = Very slow

Sources:

1. <https://extension.unh.edu/resource/organic-natural-fertilizers-home-ground-garden-fact-sheet>
2. https://extension.unh.edu/sites/default/files/migrated_unmanaged_files/Resource000602_Rep624.pdf
3. <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/what-you-can-do-your-yard>

