

Fall Fertilization of Cool Season Grasses

It is generally a good practice to use slow-release organic nitrogen (N) fertilizers in spring and summer. Generally we do not apply chemical nitrogen fertilizers after early-September because they can stimulate lush growth when plants should be preparing for winter dormancy. Late fall nitrogen fertilization of cool season grasses is a rare exception.

- ❖ Applying a low-rate of soluble high-N fertilizer (**.5-1 lb/1000sq.ft.**) in fall, when cold temperatures have reduced top growth but roots are still active, can yield great benefits.

The late-fall application should be after the last mowing of the year, while the lawn is still green, and before soils freeze. In Truckee there may only be a few weeks (or less) between your last mowing and the time the grass turns brown or disappears under snow. Generally we apply this around Halloween.

Research shows that to be effective, the nitrogen must be taken-up by the plant before the soils freeze. Quick-release (soluble) nitrogen sources such as urea, calcium nitrate, or ammonium sulfate are commonly used. Once hard frosts cause the deterioration of leaf tissue, N applications are not recommended since nutrient uptake will be negligible.

The late nitrogen is utilized by grasses for enhanced root growth, that will aid in water and nutrients uptake, increased carbohydrate buildup in the stem bases, improved winter survival, and vigorous early spring regrowth.

The target application rate for late fall should be ≤ 0.5 lbs. N/1000 square feet.

0.5 lbs N/1000 sq.ft. requires:

urea (46-0-0) -	~1 lbs/1000
ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) -	~2.25 lbs/1000
calcium nitrate (15.5-0-0) -	~3 lbs/1000

[*https://turf.purdue.edu/fall-fertilization/](https://turf.purdue.edu/fall-fertilization/) and Virginia Tech

BIOSOL is our favorite fertilizer for myriad reasons. We first used BIOSOL in the mid-90's as a possible vole repellent and it worked incredibly well on lawns. We were, however, more impressed with the growth, vigor, and overall plant health we saw everywhere we used it. BIOSOL is very long lasting and most of us use it throughout our entire landscapes and vegetable gardens, at planting and annually. For lawns, we save using it until very late fall, when rain is least likely and snow is imminent, around Thanksgiving, so the aromatic organic granules persist under snow to repel the voles through winter.

BIOSOL has ample nitrogen and all other major nutrients plus micronutrients and more with a perfect pH of 6.8 and up to 30% humic + fulvic acids. BIOSOL seems as though it was custom formulated to improve our poor, mineral soils. It is used around the globe for organic agriculture, landscape installation and maintenance, and for reclamation and restoration work on disturbed and sterile soils.

BIOSOL is a by-product of fermented soybean and cottonseed meals. It is pelletized, baked and is sterile. We have found that the addition of some organic G&B Lawn Food, with live beneficial bacteria and fungi, to BIOSOL, can speed soil building and plant growth results.

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