

Backyard: Fertilizing Fruit Trees, IPM Resources

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Fertilizing Backyard Fruit Trees



Teryl Roper, USU Extension Fruit and Nut Specialist, says that spring is the best time to fertilize fruit trees. For the most part, fruit trees only require additions of nitrogen. With the exception of iron, fruit trees generally don't require micronutrients. The amount of fertilizer to add can be based on some simple rules of thumb.

Shoot growth. Young non-bearing trees should produce 12 to 18 inches of new growth on branches each year. Bearing trees should produce 8 to 12 inches of new growth per year. Peaches will be more at 12 to 15 or 18 inches of new growth. If your trees are producing this

amount of shoot growth whatever fertilizer they are getting is sufficient. If less, the trees will benefit from additional fertilizer.

Tree age. Another useful rule of thumb is to apply one ounce of actual nitrogen per tree up to a total of 8 ounces of actual nitrogen per tree per year. As an example, a five-year-old apple tree should receive 5 ounces of actual N that year. If ammonium sulfate were used (21% N) you would need to apply 5 times the amount of actual fertilizer (at 21% N, ammonium sulfate is 1/5 N). Thus, you would apply 25 ounces, or about a pound and a half of fertilizer to the tree.

Granular fertilizers are the least expensive. After application, rain or irrigation is needed within a day or two to solubilize the fertilizer and wash it into the soil. Keeping vegetation from growing within a three-foot radius of tree trunks will allow trees to absorb applied fertilizer without competition from other plants. A thin layer of mulch in the weed free area will also discourage new weeds from growing.

Resources for Integrated Pest Management

Suppliers of Traps, Lures, Apple Bags, & IPM Products

The following is a partial list of companies that supply IPM products. No endorsement or preference is implied.

- Alpha Scents (traps and lures)
- Do My Own Pest Control (natural and organic beneficial nematode products)
- Great Lakes IPM (wide variety of IPM products)
- Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply (horticultural and IPM materials)
- Raintree Nursery (apple bags and many other horticultural products)

Suppliers of Beneficial Organisms

The following is a partial list of companies that supply natural enemies of insect and mite pests (predators & parasites). No endorsement or preference is implied.

- Arbico Organics (organic supplies for home, garden, and agriculture use)
- Biocontrol Network (beneficial insects, mites, nematodes and other biocontrol and IPM materials including Bt products)
- Greenmethods.com (beneficial insects, mites, and nematodes)
- Rincon-Vitova Insectaries Inc. (beneficial insects, mites, and nematodes)