



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM
Prairie View A&M University

Fact Sheet

Applying Fertilizer to Potted Plants

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How much fertilizer does a plant need? It varies according to the size of the pot, the rate of growth of the plant and the type of fertilizer selected. When selecting a fertilizer, try to find one that has a ratio in which the nitrogen (first number) is equal to or slightly higher than the other numbers such as a 10-10-10 or a 15-10-10. Next, determine the pot size and follow the monthly suggestions on chart below . If your fertilizer analysis isn't listed on the chart, find the closest one and use the suggested amount. Because plants in pots less than 4 inches in diameter require such tiny amounts of fertilizer, it is best to use a liquid fertilizer for them.

POT SIZE (inches)	FERTILIZER ANALYSIS		
	5-2-2	10-10-10	15-10-10
4	1/8 tsp	1/8* tsp	1/4* tsp
6	1/4 tsp	1/4* tsp	1/8 tsp
8	1/2 tsp	1/4 tsp	1/8 tsp
10	3/4* tsp	1/2* tsp	1/4* tsp
12	1 tsp	1/2 tsp	1/4 tsp
14	1 1/2 tsp	3/4 tsp	1/2* tsp

* Use slightly less than amount listed.

There are several fertilizer deficiencies to look for. They are:

- 1. Nitrogen deficiency -pale green foliage and a loss of lower leaves.**
- 2. Iron or manganese deficiency - edges of new leaves start to yellow.**
- 3. Potassium deficiency - edges of mature leaves begin to burn.**

Plants that are growing rapidly and those plants that are growing in intense light may require fertilizer on a more frequent basis than mention previously. Also, if you haven't fertilized in a long time, chances are that your plant are in need of it.

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