



FYN Garden Q & A Series

Thomas Becker
Extension Agent, Florida
Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN TOPIC: Lawn (turf-type) Fertilizer

Question: I'm using this University of Florida link (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh014>) to try and better manage what lawn fertilizer to use. The fact sheet suggests using a (turf-type) fertilizer like ammonium sulfate or other soluble nitrogen sources? I'm having a tough time locating this one or other soluble fertilizer products for lawns? Can you help? Rich

Answer: A good lawn (turf-type) fertilizer often contains a range of nitrogen -N- source materials but not only soluble-type formulations. Many different grades of fertilizers are sold. Many still contain cheaper, but highly soluble nitrogen like ammonium sulfate. To better answer questions from homeowners about what fertilizers should be used, a survey was done last summer in several Lee County garden centers. The survey found 46 different (turf-type) fertilizers being sold, the majority of which did not contain the 50% slow release nitrogen (SRN) content required by Lee County and other local fertilizer ordinances. (http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsAZ/Fertilizer_Survey.pdf.)

Homeowners and professionals need to apply a turf or landscape fertilizer containing no less than fifty percent (50%) SRN per guaranteed analysis label. Ammonium Sulfate (AS) has 21% nitrogen but none is SRN. Other highly soluble nitrogen fertilizers having no SRN include ammonium nitrate (34% N), urea (46% N) and calcium nitrate (15.5% N). Given a choice of those listed above, AS is the preferred one but all of them will green lawns quickly and lead to more time and require spring maintenance mowing.

Those listed on the survey having high nitrogen content solubility also have the greatest potential for homeowner misapplication leading to pollution. Follow all application and environmental precautions listed on the product label. For example, look for statements such as: only use this product on dry turf foliage, do not spill or use when heavy rain events are forecast. Or, keep these products highly soluble particles from blowing and dropping onto driveways and sidewalks or falling into swimming pools, ponds, lakes and canals. Apply this fertilizer with a shielded spreader only. For more information, read the homeowner FAQs at www.fertilizesmart.com.

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

[http:// gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu](http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. 04/06/13

