

Spreader Settings

Fertilizer and seed spreader are used to evenly disperse weed killers, granular fertilizer, grass seed, and insecticides. With rotary spreaders, deciding what setting to use depends on many different things. On your bag of product there should be some helpful information telling you how many pounds to put out per 1000 sq. ft. This information will be the guide on determining what setting to put your spreader on.

The Basics

A common problem is that the product manufactures only list a select few spreader brands while giving settings. If you do not see your brand of spreader there are some basic tips to help you get started. Normally you want to open your spreader 20% for a sufficient application. So if your spreader has 10 settings, open it to the second position, if your spreader only has 5 settings, you can open to the first setting. Here are some tools to help you get a better idea of what your lawn needs.

Basic Measurements

1 cup of fertilizer weighs about $\frac{1}{2}$ pound
1 pint of fertilizer weighs just less than 1 lb
1 quart of fertilizer weighs about $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs
There are 43,560 square feet per acre

Lawn Nutrients required annually

Grass Type	Pounds of Nitrogen per 1,000 Square Feet
Bahia grass	2 to 4 lbs. of actual N
Bentgrass	4 to 6 lbs. of actual N
Bermuda grass, Common	2 to 6 lbs. of actual N
Bermuda grass, Hybrid	4 to 6 lbs. of actual N
Blue grama	1 to 2 lbs. of actual N
Buffalo grass	0 to 2 lbs. of actual N
Centipede grass	1 to 2 lbs. of actual N
Fine fescue	2 to 3 lbs. of actual N
Kentucky bluegrass	4 to 6 lbs. of actual N

Ryegrass	2 to 4 lbs. of actual N
St. Augustine grass	4 to 5 lbs. of actual N
Tall fescue	2 to 6 lbs. of actual N
Zoysia grass	3 to 4 lbs. of actual N

Things to Keep in Mind

This chart shows how many units of Nitrogen are needed per year which is to be broken down according to how many times fertilizer is being applied. For instance if your grass needs 4 lbs of actual N per year, it would be best to put out 1 lb of N. approximately 4 times a year. Putting all the needed nitrogen out all at one time could burn your lawn.

Determining how much fertilizer you will need

Most fertilizer bags will say how many square feet it will cover but if it doesn't, here is an easy way to figure it out yourself.

Nitrogen Application Rates for Lawns

Percentage of Nitrogen in the Fertilizer Bag	Pounds of Fertilizer to Apply to 1,000 Square Feet
1	100.0
2	50.0
3	33.3
4	25.0
5	20.0
6	16.7
7	14.3
8	12.5
9	11.1
10	10.0
11	9.1
12	8.3

13	7.7
14	7.1
15	6.7
16	6.3

-One 40 lb. bag of 12-12-12 will cover 4800 sq. ft. if 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. is being applied.

$$40\text{lb bag} / 8.3 \text{ lbs of fertilizer per 1000 sq. ft.} = 4800 \text{ sq. ft.}$$

-One 40 lb. bag of 10-10-10 will cover 5000 sq. ft. if 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. is being applied.

$$40 \text{ lb bag} / 10 \text{ lbs of fertilizer per 1000 sq. ft.} = 4000 \text{ sq. ft.}$$

Applying fertilizer

When applying fertilizer, the best way to ensure an even spread is to spread half of the fertilizer in one direction and the other half going perpendicular to the first rows you made. Keeping evenly spaced rows is very important as overlapping too much may result in slight burning. When you finish going over the lawn in one direction, make a 90 degree turn to start new rows perpendicular to the previous ones. Starting off with half the amount of fertilizer will also give you a chance to make sure the right amount of fertilizer is being applied. If you notice that you're running out of fertilizer too soon, slightly turn down your setting to reduce the amount of fertilizer being applied. Be sure to take note of what spreader setting worked best so the next time you will know exactly what works best.

Rotary vs. Drop Spreader

A rotary spreader is the most commonly used, they use a wheel to evenly disperse granules or seeds to each side as well as below the spreader. A drop spreader tends to be more time consuming as it only covers the area directly under the spreader, leaving more passes to be made. The different types of spreaders all have different settings so the setting you use with a rotary spreader will probably not be the same on the drop spreader.

Fertilizing Flowers and Garden Plants

For flowers apply approx. **5 lbs.(8-8-8 or 10-10-10)** or **3-4 lbs (12-12-12 or 13-13-13)** per 100 sq. ft and work into the soil, during flowering periods you can apply 2-3 lbs. per 100 sq. ft. every 4 to 6 weeks during the flowering season.

On row crops apply **1 ½ lbs.(12-12-12 or 13-13-13)** to **3 lbs.(8-8-8 or 10-10-10)** per 100 ft. of row in a trench 1" to 2" deeper than the seeds are to be placed and 2" to 3" to the side of the row.

For vegetable gardens broadcast **2 lbs. (12-12-12 or 13-13-13)** to **4 lbs (8-8-8 or 10-10-10)** per 100 sq ft. Cut into the soil well and then add 1 ½ to 2 lbs. raked in 1" to 2".

Trees should be fertilized in late winter or early spring and will need **2 lbs. (12-12-12 or 13-13-13) to 3 lbs. (8-8-8 or 10-10-10)** of fertilizer per 1" of trunks diameter. This will need to be drilled in as deep as possible and watered throughly.

Shrubs need fertilizer based on their height

Quantity	Plant Height
2-4 tbsp.....	up to 1 ft.
½ lb.	3-4 ft.
2-3 lbs.....	5-8 ft.