



Fertilizing Vegetables

The most accurate means of determining nutrient needs for vegetable gardens is by having the soil tested. Lacking a soil test, however, gardeners may follow these general rules of thumb for fertilizing vegetable gardens:

Limestone

Dolomitic or Hi-Mag: 75 lbs./1000 sq. ft. every 3 yrs. Lowers pH, supplies both calcium and magnesium. Best applied in fall.

Alternatively, apply 150 lbs of wood ashes /1000 sq. ft. every 3 years. Use ashes from household woodstoves only; do not use coal ash or ash from commercial woodburning facilities.

Commercial Fertilizer (Supplying nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and magnesium (Mg))

Without manure: 10-10-10 (NPK) at 25lbs./1000 sq. ft.

With manure: 5-10-10 at 25 lbs/1000 sq. ft.(or equivalent rates and analyses)

Organic Fertilizers

Nitrogen

Composted Manure*

Cow or horse: 15-20 bu./1000 sq. ft ; Poultry 250 lbs/1000 sq. ft. (5-6 bu./1000 sq. ft.)

Phosphorus

Rock phosphate (3% available P₂O₅) - 100 lbs./1000 sq. ft.

Potassium

Granite dust (3-5% K₂O) 100 lbs./1000 sq. ft.

Incorporate fertilizer(s) and lime thoroughly with into the top few inches of soil before planting. If possible, apply lime in the fall.

For safety, Cooperative Extension recommends using only **composted or well-aged manures on garden crops, unless manure is incorporated to grow a cover crop first, with subsequent food crops grown after cover crop has decomposed.*

*Fact sheet originally developed by Dr. Otho Wells, former UNH Cooperative Extension Vegetable Specialist
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