

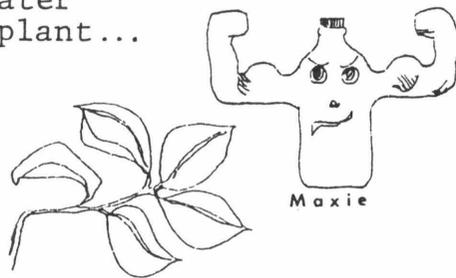


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HELP!

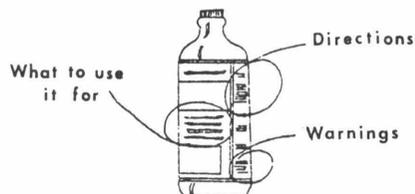
When using fertilizers and other garden chemicals, remember:
ALWAYS READ THE PACKAGE LABEL. Fertilizers are so different that a
teaspoon of one kind
of fertilizer in a
gallon of water
may kill a plant...



... while the
same amount of
another in a
gallon of water
may not be
enough!



READ THE LABEL!



Always fertilize as directed. Liquid fertilizers are generally mixed with water before applying, and it is a good idea to have the soil already moist before adding fertilizer. Granular and time-release fertilizers are usually mixed into the soil or soil mix before planting.



For vegetables, be sure to get a fertilizer that lists vegetables on its label.

Other special plant foods may not be good for vegetables.

Follow instructions for container plants if you are growing your vegetables in containers.



You can get either organic or inorganic (synthetic chemical) fertilizers. Inorganic fertilizers are usually easier to get and less expensive, but require more care. Organic fertilizers are made from plant and animal wastes. They are safe to use and do not burn plants easily, but in most cases it takes more organic fertilizer to get the same result.

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When the directions say to use a $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ strength solution, it means that you use $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ the amount of fertilizer in the same amount of water.

A low strength solution is used for seedlings and for transplanting and is called a starter solution.

How do you know what is in a fertilizer? All plants need three major nutrients, nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). If you look at a fertilizer label, you will see three numbers, like this:

Normal Solution



PER

1 TSP



1/2 Strength



PER

1/2 TSP

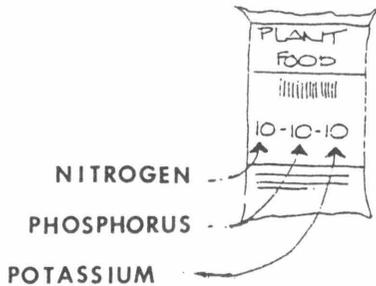


1/4 Strength



PER

1/4 TSP



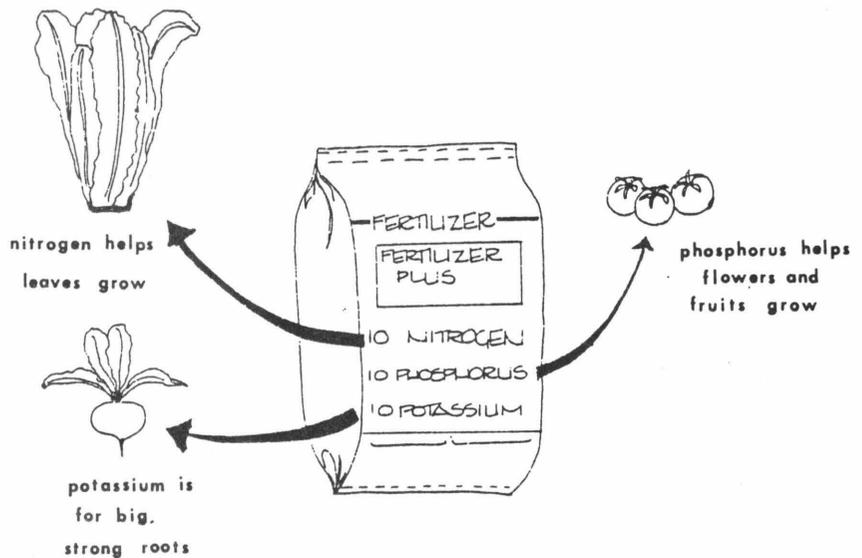
This is the N-P-K value. The order is always the same, and it means this fertilizer contains:

- 10% N (nitrogen)
- 10% P (phosphorus)
- 10% K (potassium)

Vegetables grow well with a balanced fertilizer; that is, one with about the same amount of all three major nutrients.

But keep in mind that different nutrients do different things for plants.

In addition to N, P, and K, plants need trace elements, which are usually supplied by garden soil naturally. But if you are growing vegetables in container, your soil mix may be lacking in one or more trace elements. Use of a fertilizer with trace elements added or using organic fertilizers will solve this problem.



New Words

granular: grain-like; many fertilizers look like large grains of sand

time-release: packaged so that small quantities of fertilizer are released over a long period of time

trace elements: elements needed by plants in very small (trace) amounts