

Would You Like To Help Your Trees Grow More Quickly?

Proper fertilization of young trees can significantly increase their rate of growth, and at the same time increase their resistance to insects and diseases. But before you run out and put a standard tree and shrub fertilizer around your trees and shrubs, please read the rest of this column, because the standard tree and shrub fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium may not be all that your trees need in the way of fertilizer.

Fertilizer is a broad term that is used to describe an almost unlimited number of products that contain elements that plants need for proper growth. Most "fertilizers" contain some combination of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and some sold in this area also contain varying amounts of sulphur and iron. To be sure, trees and shrubs need moderate amounts of these elements for proper growth, but I have observed over the past ten years that trees that are fertilized with these traditional fertilizer products do not seem to respond with the amount of new growth and vigor that they should. Many don't seem to respond at all. The reason for this is that trees and shrubs that are growing in the high ph soils of the western high plains actually need two kinds of fertilizers.

The most important fertilizer they need is one that provides all of the so-called minor elements that they need. These minor elements include iron, zinc, manganese, magnesium, calcium, sulphur, copper, boron, molybdenum, and maybe one or two others. They don't need much of any of these elements, but a shortage of any one of these elements can limit the growth of the entire plant. A so-called "minor element deficiency" would be a very logical explanation for a tree or shrub not responding to an application of traditional tree fertilizer.

Until recently it has been very difficult to find a fertilizer product that contains only the minor elements plants need, but we now have just such a product available. This new product contains all of the minor elements in proportion to the ratio they are required by trees and shrubs plus sulphur. It is designed to be placed in holes in the ground around the tree rather than spread on the ground. The theory is that this will keep the elements in the fertilizer available to the plant for a longer period of time. The sulphur in the fertilizer is intended to create a zone of acidity around the fertilizer that will prevent the minor elements in the fertilizer from being tied up by the surrounding higher ph soil. There does seem to be some research that shows that a tree's root system will fairly quickly find these little pockets of minor elements in the soil and be able to draw sufficient quantities of minor elements out of these pockets to sustain healthy growth.

Fertilizing with minor element fertilizer can be done any time of year, and will probably need to be repeated every two or three years.

GREENTREE PLUS EIGHT FERTILIZER

DIRECTIONS FOR USE:

Use a bulb planter or similar device to remove soil plugs approximately 4 inches deep and two inches in diameter. Remove three to four plugs for each inch of tree trunk diameter up to a maximum of 24 plugs. The plugs should be removed within the root zone of the tree which generally extends from the trunk of the tree to five to ten feet beyond the drip line of the tree.

Pour 1/3 to 1/2 cup of **GREENTREE plus eight** fertilizer in each hole, remove approximately 1 inch of soil from the bottom of the soil plug and replace the soil plug.

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