

SOIL TEST INFORMATION SHEET NO. F-550

Prepared by Extension Fruit and Nut Specialist Dr. Michael Polozola

Figs

1. Fig trees grow best in soils with a pH between 6.0 and 7.0.
2. Nitrogen (N) Fertilization for Home Orchards:
 - Apply ½ lb of 8-8-8 fertilizer per year of plant age, up to a maximum of 7 lbs per plant annually. Example: A 4-year-old fig receives 2 lbs of 8-8-8.
 - Equivalent rates:
 - 0.4 lb of 10-10-10 per year of plant age.
 - 0.3 lb of 13-13-13 per year of plant age.
 - 0.25 lb of 17-17-17 per year of plant age.
 - Do not increase fertilizer rate after 10 years of age.
3. Application timing:
 - Make the first application in late winter or early spring (February to early March).
 - A light second application may be made in June or early July if needed.
 - Do not fertilize after July 15, as late-season growth is more prone to freeze injury.
4. Application Methods
 - Fertilizer can be applied in one of two ways:
 - Broadcasting: Evenly spread fertilizer on the soil surface around the drip line (edge of the canopy). This is often the easiest method for homeowners.
 - Dibbling: Place fertilizer in small holes about 6 inches deep around the drip line. This method helps direct nutrients to the root zone and reduces competition from grass or mulch.
 - Avoid placing fertilizer directly against the trunk.
5. Monitoring Growth
 - A good indicator of adequate fertilization is annual shoot growth:
 - Aim for 12 to 18 inches of new growth per year.
 - Less growth may indicate a need for more nitrogen; excessive growth suggests overfertilization.
6. Additional Notes: Figs are relatively low-maintenance and often require less fertilizer than other fruit trees. Use your soil test results to guide phosphorus, potassium, and pH adjustments. Maintain a grass-free zone around the base of the plant and consider mulching to conserve moisture and reduce weed competition. Avoid overfertilizing, especially as trees mature.
7. Contact your county agent for additional information and help in your fertilization program. The agent also receives a copy of this report for the parish office files.