

SOIL TEST INFORMATION SHEET NO. H-800

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Bulbs - Spring Flowering

1. Apply a slow-release fertilizer at the rate of one pound per 1000 ft² at planting time in the fall. For new landscape beds, take soil samples to assess existing pH and nutrient content. New landscape beds may require more phosphorus, especially when fresh organic matter is being used. Soil-based plantings may already have sufficient phosphorus. For existing beds, a fall soil test may be necessary to identify nutritional needs.
2. Fertilizer can be broadcast over the soil surface (for existing, intensively planted beds) or lightly incorporated into the landscape bed at installation.
3. For established bulbs, broadcast fertilizer over the area immediately before or at the time that new foliage appears. It is best to use slow-release fertilizers to provide lasting nutrition. Avoid 8-8-8, 13-13-13, and 34-0-0. The former (8-8-8 and 13-13-13) may provide excess phosphorus, whereas 34-0-0 may provide too much nitrogen too early.
4. Bonemeal and superphosphate can be used to supplement a regular fertilization program. When applying phosphorus, make sure that application rates are appropriate for residual phosphorus remaining from past seasons.
5. Maintain the proper soil pH for the spring-flowering bulbs being grown. Ideal soil pH is 6.0 to 6.5. Modify soil pH by lowering with sulfur or aluminum sulfate or raising with dolomitic limestone. Newly installed landscape beds are likely to fluctuate with regards to pH, so closely monitor levels immediately after installation. Additions of sulfate or limestone may take an elongated period of time to take effect on soil pH.
6. 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.