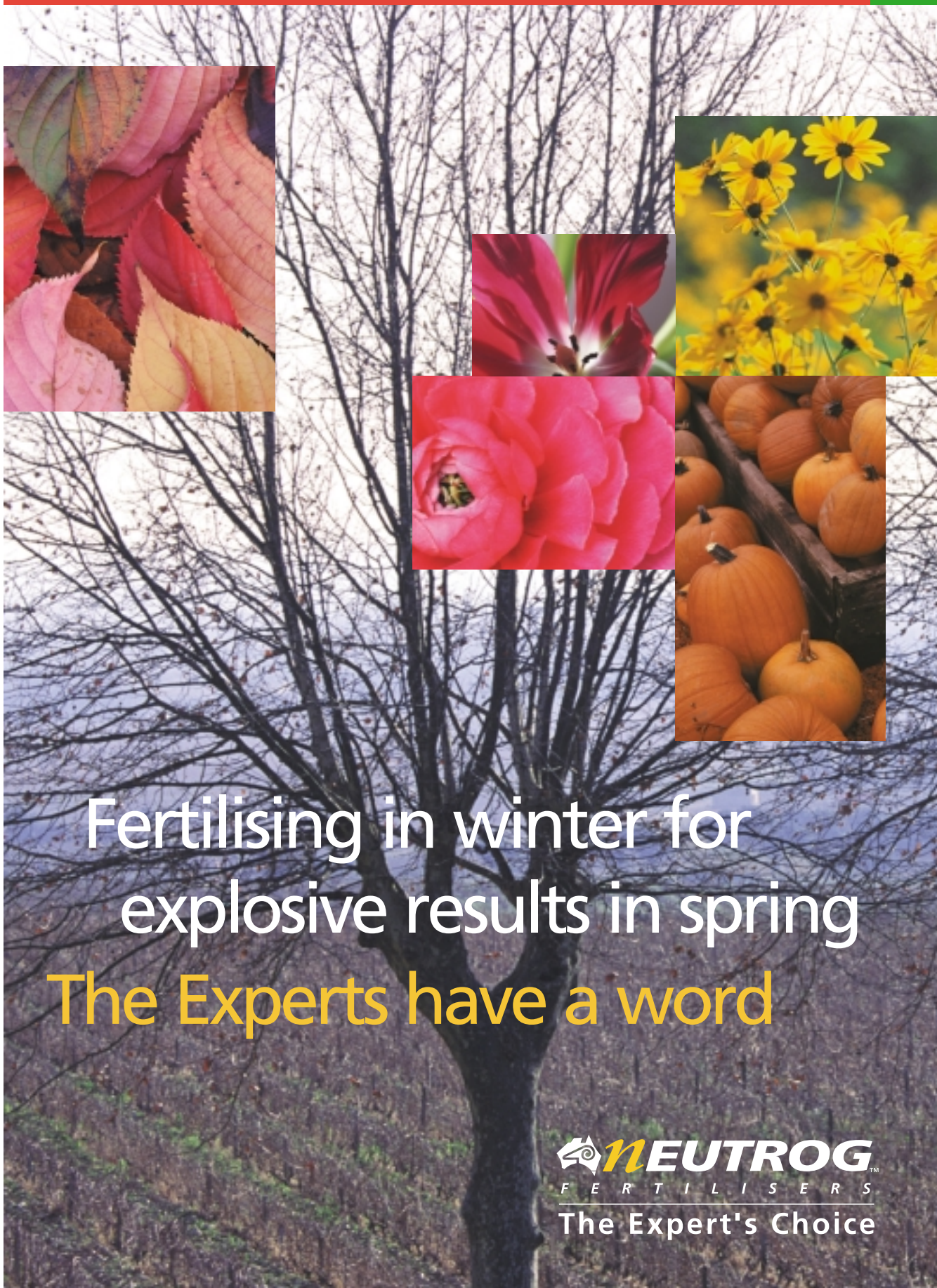


feedback

Seasonal update from Neutrog Australia Winter 2000



Fertilising in winter for
explosive results in spring
The Experts have a word

Fertilising in winter with Neutrog. The Experts advice.

Sophie Thomson
Botanic Gardens
Advisory Service

Sophie Thomson, Manager of the Botanic Gardens Advice and Help Line, gives us the expert advice on fertilising your garden during winter for explosive results in spring.

As the trend towards using organic fertilisers grows, we need to rethink our beliefs about when and how often we fertilise. There is an old belief that many home gardeners still hold as true, which says that we should only feed in autumn and spring.

This is correct with regards to applying manufactured or 'chemical' fertilisers as they are leached too readily in winter, and require a high soil temperature to be taken up and utilised by the plant. The water soluble products in manufactured or 'chemical' fertilisers go directly to the roots and under winter's wet conditions, any excess is washed straight past the root zone. When using manufactured or 'chemical' fertilisers, autumn and spring is the ideal time of application and winter fertilising is ineffective.

However when it comes to using organic fertilisers, professional horticulturists apply them all year round. Feeding with an organic fertiliser in winter will not produce visible results at that time, however below the ground level there are great benefits. Strong root growth is encouraged despite the cold conditions, and this translates into a more exuberant flush of spring growth as the temperature rises. Also, adding organic matter of any type to the soil results in an improved soil structure and drainage, along with increased microbial and earthworm activity.

The nutrients in organic fertilisers do not leach as readily as manufactured or 'chemical' fertilisers. Organic fertilisers have a slow release action, with nutrients released over a period of several

months. Any nutrients which are not taken up by the root system in winter, will be taken up in spring. Also by strengthening a plants roots, organic fertilisers encourage the root system to enlarge and cover a greater surface area. This enables the plant to draw nutrients from a greater volume of soil. Hence as soon as the temperature increases, plant growth will be explosive. These strengthened plants are healthier, and consequently more disease resistant. They are also better able to tolerate drier conditions.

One of the many professionals who is an advocate of using organic fertilisers in winter is rose grower Andrew Ross, from Ross Roses at Willunga, South Australia.

'We have been using Neutrog each July for the last seven years with great results. We find that it takes several weeks to start acting, but this organic fertiliser provides available nutrients when the roses need them most. By applying one to two handfuls of this pelletised fertiliser per plant in winter, the roses have an improved spring flush of flowers, and their growth and performance is sustained into summer. We are also very aware that the addition of Neutrog greatly enriches our soil by adding organic matter'

The end result of using organic fertilisers in your garden during winter is that your plants will be more vigorous and healthy, and in spring they will flower earlier and over a longer period.

If you have any questions on fertilising your garden, plant selection, pests and diseases or weed control, **call the experts at the Botanic Gardens Advice and Help Line on 1902 283 583.** Great value for expert advice at \$2.95 a minute (higher from public and mobile phones). For a comprehensive and complete on-line directory for finding garden related information, products and services you can now also visit our website at: **www.botanicgardens.com.au**.



Sophie Thomson

Moss Bray
Sim's Orchids

Moss Bray was an apprentice carpenter who went on to become a government building inspector. Fourteen years ago he left his job to work full-time growing orchids (cymbidiums). Moss is a serious player. He has 30,000 orchids and supplies cut flowers to the Adelaide market as well as selling young cymbidiums.

He has his own laboratory and produces 'merciones' for other cymbidium growers in South Australia and interstate. Moss has been using Neutrog products for the last six years and says the difference in his plants when he changed was very noticeable. Particularly, the young plants were more lush and green.

He said, 'Prior to using Neutrog I used my own formulation of liquid fertiliser and we still use a little of the liquid, but I am thinking of changing to using only Neutrog'. When asked why, Moss

commented that recently he grew a batch of orchids using only Neutrog throughout the entire year, including winter and the results were fantastic. 'In our ten inch pots we were getting up to 15 spikes'.

Moss gives each of his pots half a handful of Neutrog three times throughout the year. He is a show judge and member of various orchid clubs in South Australia and Victoria. His final comment was 'With a slow release fertiliser, Neutrog is the only way to go'.



Luke & Helen Dawson
Dawsons Turf

Luke Dawson has 22 acres of turf at present and he has had up to 60. He previously used another organic product but changed to Neutrog products in 1988. The Dawsons fertilise twice per year and use Neutrog fertilisers. His application rate is 350kg per hectare.

Luke first applies Neutrog at seeding in early winter and then ten weeks after that (still in winter) he applies Neutrog again. He plants in early winter and spring when there is a forecast of

light rain. Too much rain and he gets 'washing' of the seed.

The Dawsons estimate that with their current, largely winter fertilising program, 'sodding' occurs two months earlier. 'That is significant'. Luke also advises home gardeners to fertilise in winter to promote root growth and prevent thatching.

A final comment from Luke was on the improvement to the soil. 'The Neutrog products build up the soil and don't destroy it as can other methods. We of course get a double fertilising effect. The increased worms produce 'castings' and that provides a major benefit to the turf'.



Luke Dawson



Len Broadstock



Colchester Nursery

Len Broadstock
Victoria State Rose Garden

This report is an update from Len. He provided a testimonial for our first edition of Feedback in autumn 1999. Len's fertilising program remains the same, with one major exception – he now fertilises right through the year.

Winter fertilising is new to him, but he was advised on the benefits of building strong root growth to obtain strong plant growth in spring. He fertilised last winter as well and considered, although it was a bad year, there were obvious benefits.

'I estimate', said Len, 'that growth in the roses using Neutrog

is approximately 30 centimetres greater than under the previous regime of horse manure (rotted down for one year), blood and bone and potassium sulphate'.

His program is to apply 120 grams of Neutrog per rose, five times a year. Len agreed totally that a healthy rose is far less susceptible to disease, and the strong root growth developed through winter fertilising will certainly aid in producing a healthy rose. He recently had a comprehensive soil test completed and was advised there was absolutely no need to add potassium sulphate. Len's quotable quote is provided by his soil tester. 'I know farmers who would kill for soil in this condition'.

Darren Jackson
Colchester Nursery & Garden Supplies,
President of the
Independent Nursery Group

Colchester, are a major Victorian nursery and one of the State's largest suppliers of potted roses. Darren began using Neutrog products four years ago on advice from other members of the nursery group.

Prior to that, Colchester had been using Osmocote and IBDU, particularly on their potted roses. Darren describes the transformation as nothing short of amazing. 'The foliage thickened and we had more and much larger blooms. Our customers noticed and almost to a person they commented on the incredible difference that Neutrog had made'.

Darren's usual method is to apply fertiliser from August through to April. The rate is a handful in each pot approximately every two months. Colchester are now moving to fertilise in winter to establish strong root development for a burst of growth in spring. They have reports of other growers moving to winter fertilising using Neutrog products and achieving outstanding results.

Darren commented that a major benefit is that these more healthy plants are much more resilient to diseases such as Black Spot and mildew to which roses are susceptible. When asked for a quote, Darren said it had to be a customer comment shortly after they commenced with Neutrog fertilisers: 'The roses look fantastic, has this place changed hands?'.

Mark Bouchier
Town & Country Gardens
Landscaping & Horticulture,
SDN Sunday Gardening
Curator, Pulteney Grammar

Mark has the distinction of being Neutrog's first customer back in 1988. Prior to that he used blood and bone. Mark appreciated the consistent quality of Neutrog and the ease of use of a pelletised product. The improvement after the change was quite marked.

Mark strongly believes in winter fertilising. In his own words, 'evergreen plants benefit greatly from an application of Neutrog in early and mid winter. Plants that have been stressed in the summer heat regain their vigour prior to a strong growth burst in spring'.

He said 'Those plants that flower in winter are put under high stress. The flowering takes great energy from plants such as: camellias, azaleas, daphne and magnolia'.

'With regards to lawn care, we use Neutrog in early June and again in late July. Not only does it

aid in root strengthening, lawns will retain their green colouration – even those lawns such as Santa Anna and common couch'.

'From our observations, the improvement in appearance of plants and lawns when using Neutrog organic products lasts approximately three months. With inorganic (chemical) fertilisers it is approximately one month'.

Mark also manages the gardens at Adelaide's Pulteney Grammar School. Some sections are 100 years old. Up until 1995,



these gardens were maintained using inorganic fertiliser. Since then Neutrog products have been used. The improvement is such that this year the gardens are for the first time being placed in the State Open Gardens Scheme.


F E R T I L I S E R S
The Expert's Choice

FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS USE THE EXPERTS FERTILISER PROGRAM OVERLEAF

Neutrog recommends for explosive results, the following fertilising program:

The high organic matter and lower nitrogen content of these two products makes them ideally suited to winter application. With reduced leaching these products will condition the soil and encourage root growth. The greater the root growth the larger the surface area of soil available to draw nutrient from. Hence fertilising in winter for explosive results in spring.

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Lawn				
Garden				

Analysing Neutrog's winter recommendations

GARDEN: BOUNCE BACK (in pelletised form)

LAWN: BLADE RUNNER (in fine crumble form)

Analysis

(dry weight basis)		%W/W
Nitrogen (N)	As Organic	3.0
Phosphorus (P)	As Citrate soluble	2.0
Potassium (K)	As Organic	1.7
Calcium (Ca)	As Organic	7.0
Magnesium (Mg)	As Organic	0.65
Sulphur (S)	As Organic	2.0
Iron (Fe)	As Organic	0.2
Zinc (Zn)	As Organic	0.035
Manganese (Mn)	As Organic	0.05
Molybdenum (Mo)	As Organic	0.0002
Boron (B)	As Organic	0.0003
Copper (Cu)	As Organic	0.0006

The Neutrog products can be delivered to all areas. Should your local nursery not wish to stock the product please contact our distributor to arrange home delivery. Your business is important to us, please do not accept alternative products.

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Our apologies to The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and The Botanic Gardens of Adelaide for past errors in our promotional material.

The current 'stamps' above will replace all incorrect versions.

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