

SOIL TEST INFORMATION SHEET NO. H-860

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Shrubs

1. The recommended pH range for the majority of shrubs grown in Louisiana landscapes is 5.5-6.5. Shrubs that prefer a pH range at the lower end of this scale are referred to as acid-loving (examples: camellias, gardenias, azaleas, wax myrtles, hydrangea). Other shrubs will grow best at the upper end of this pH range.
2. Shrubs are generally fertilized once per year. This should be done during late winter or early spring (March-May). Evenly distribute the fertilizer under the spread of the plant and "water in" if the soil is dry. Avoid fertilizer placement next to the stems or shoots of the shrubs.
3. Select a slow release fertilizer and apply fertilizer at the rate of 1-2 pounds of nitrogen per 1000ft² of landscape bed area. Camellia and azalea fertilizers are good to use also. Avoid using 34-0-0 (ammonium nitrate) in shrub fertilization. Other fertilizers, such as 8-8-8 or 13-13-13 can be used, but it is best to utilize slow-release types.
4. Unless phosphorus and/or potassium levels are inadequate in the soil (as determined by a soil test), use a complete fertilizer with a 3:1:2 or 3:1:3 ratio (e.g. 12-4-8 or 15-5-15). A 3:1:2 fertilizer contains 3 parts nitrogen, 1 part phosphorus as P₂O₅, and 2 parts potassium as K₂O.
5. Foliar applications of iron or application of a slow release granular iron fertilizer, such as Ironite, can correct foliar iron nutrient deficiencies.
6. Raise soil pH to a recommended level with the addition of dolomitic limestone or agricultural limestone.
7. Lower soil pH to a recommended level by adding aluminum sulfate or elemental sulfur.
8. 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.