

Soil Test Information Sheet No. H-870

Prepared by Extension Forester Don Reed

Christmas Trees – Virginia Pine

1. Christmas trees are generally grown in a 4 to 5 year cycle. Initial site preparation is most important and should be accomplished by thorough land renovation in late summer or early fall. If necessary this is the time to break up a hard pan that might be present by ripping or sub soiling.
2. Lime, phosphate, potash, secondary, and micronutrients should be applied according to a soil test following the land renovation in September and be disked in. The site will then be ready for an early spring (January through mid March) planting. Don't plant Virginia pine on soils with a pH over 6.5 or on a site with poor drainage.
3. After planting, nitrogen should be applied in split applications according to the following schedule: distribute the fertilizer evenly under the spread of the plant foliage. (do not place the fertilizer next to the shoots or stems of the plants).

Stage of Growth	Fertilizer Source	1 st Application per tree Early March	2 nd Application per tree Mid April	3 rd Application per tree Early July
	Ammonium Nitrate (33%N) or an equivalent N source			
Year 1	----	----	----	----
Year 2	“	2 Tbs.	2 Tbs.	2 Tbs.
Year 3	“	4 Tbs.	4 Tbs.	4 Tbs.
Year 4	“	4 Tbs.	4 Tbs.	4 Tbs.
Year 5	“	4 Tbs.	4 Tbs.	4 Tbs.

Tbs. = tablespoon

Note: If soil pH is above 6.0, use Ammonium Sulphate (21%N) as a nitrogen source to assist in lowering the pH. Fertilizer should not be applied in drought conditions.

Broadcast volumes of fertilizer

1 Tbs. Ammonium Nitrate (33%N) = 1 1/3 Tbs. Ammonium Sulphate (21%N)

1 Tbs. Ammonium Nitrate (33%N) = 25 lbs./acre

1 1/3 Tbs. Ammonium Sulphate (21%N) per tree = 33 lbs./acre

Apply fertilizer by hand for best results. Apply as follows:

1st year No fertilizer
 2nd year Broadcast in a 2' circle area around each tree.
 3rd year Broadcast in a 3 1/2' circle area around each tree
 and each year
 thereafter

4. Soil test after second year for phosphorus, potash, secondary and micronutrients.

After second year of growth, the nitrogen rate should be cut in half if needle length appears to be getting too long or excessive top and lateral vegetable growth is observed. If excessive growth persists, eliminate one nitrogen application.

5. The shearing schedule should be followed closely or modified as needed to assist in preventing excessive internodal growth. Remember, the objective is to grow a shapely tree with medium to heavy dense, dark green foliage.
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.

Conversion Factors

1 acre = 43,560 square feet

1 pint of water = 1 pound

1 pint = 2 cups

32 Tablespoons (Tbs.)

96 Teaspoons (Tsp)

1 pint of mixed fertilizer = 1 pound

0.1 pound of mixed fertilizer = 3.2 Tbs.

1 pint of Ammonium nitrate or urea = 13 ounces

0.1 pound of Ammonium nitrate or urea = 4 Tbs