

## **ABOUT FERTILIZER**

Fertilizers supply the nutrients plants need – N-P-K: Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium.

### **Conventional Chemical Fertilizers vs. Organic Fertilizers**

<b>CHEMICAL</b>	<b>ORGANIC</b>
<b>Petroleum-based product (takes 5 tons of petroleum to make 1 ton of fertilizer)</b>	<b>Made of plant, animal and mineral materials</b>
<b>Water soluble – dissolves quickly, is available to plant immediately for a quick green-up. However, the plant can only uptake so much fertilizer and the rest runs off into streams, rivers, bodies of water becoming a major source of pollution, depleting oxygen and suffocating marine and plant life.</b>	<b>Non water soluble – is broken down slowly by microorganisms in the soil, provides a slow, steady continuous supply of nutrients to plant roots. Does not run off – is held in soil until broken down and taken up by plants.</b>



To distinguish between conventional chemical vs. organic fertilizers, check the first number of 3 numbers on front of bag showing N-P-K (nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium) levels. The front number measures nitrogen level. In organic fertilizers it will be between 3 and 12. In chemical fertilizers, it will be 19 or higher. Anything in between (13 – 18) will be a bridge product,

### **SOME ORGANIC FERTILIZER BRANDS/PRODUCTS**

- **Organica** – 4 Step All Natural Lawn Care Program ([www.organica.net/index.asp](http://www.organica.net/index.asp))
- **Renaissance** – NO Phosphorous Lawn Fertilizer (6-0-6)
- **CockaDoodle DOO** – 4 Step Lawn Program [www.purebarnyard.com/cockadoodledoo](http://www.purebarnyard.com/cockadoodledoo)
- **MegaGreen** - (liquid organic fertilizer made of fish protein) available at [www.multibloom.com](http://www.multibloom.com). (very inexpensive)

(part organic, part chemical content).higher. Anything in between (13 – 18) will be a bridge product, (part organic, part chemical content).

### **ABOUT COMPOST**

Compost, (nicknamed “Black Gold” by organic growers) is the best source of organic matter for the soil. Compost is decomposed plant materials including leaves, yard clippings and vegetable matter. It is also rich in microorganisms that break down the plants. Compost is a rich source of nutrients, microbial life and humus for the soil. It is key to successful organic growing.



You can make your own compost or buy aged compost from local farm or compost producer but it must be well aged. It is difficult to know exactly what is in these home made composts unless you get the compost tested. For example, unless the compost heats up to 137 degrees F for 3 days, there may still be weed seeds or pathogens in the compost.

If you do not have a reliable source of aged compost, there are several brands of bagged compost that you can buy off the shelf.

## **BAGGED COMPOST BRANDS**

- **Coast of Maine**
- **Fafard**
- **McEnroe's**
- **Renaissance (made by PJC & Co: 978-432-1019)**