

Soil Testing Laboratory

Soil Test Note 11: Commercial Peach Production

Your Soil Test Report provides information on the amount of lime required for optimum growth and also indicates whether P₂O₅ or K₂O fertilizer will be needed. The suggested rates of P₂O₅ and K₂O to apply are listed in this leaflet, along with the recommended N fertilizer rates.

PREPLANTING

If the P₂O₅ or K₂O soil test indicates Low, use the following table to determine the type and amount of fertilizer to use.

Soil Test Results	Fertilizer to Use	Amount to Apply (lbs./A)
Low P ₂ O ₅	0-46-0	100
Low K ₂ O	0-0-60	100
Low P ₂ O ₅ and K ₂ O	0-14-14	400
Medium or higher P ₂ O ₅ and K ₂ O	None	None

Broadcast and plow-down or disk-in fertilizer before planting. Application of fertilizer at planting time is not recommended.

NON-BEARING TREES

1st year

After growth has begun, usually about the first of April in Virginia, apply 0.15 lb actual N around each tree. Example: 1 lb of nitrate of soda (16-0-0) per tree.

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2nd Year

Same as 1st year, using 0.3 lb N.

3rd Year

1. Same as 1st year, using 0.45 lb N.
2. Where terminal growth is excessive (40" or more), either reduce the amount per application or eliminate one or both of the later applications.

BEARING TREES

1. Apply annually 0.05 lb actual N per year of tree's age up to a maximum of 1.0 lb N per tree.
2. Reduce or increase rate of N application according to previous year's growth, 10 to 18" of terminal growth annually being considered limits for maximum economic production.
3. Nitrogen fertilizer may be applied either in the fall after leaves have fallen, or in early spring about 3 or 4 weeks before active growth begins. On light, sandy soil, it is best to delay application until early spring.

P₂O₅ and K₂O MAINTENANCE IN ESTABLISHED ORCHARDS

(Bearing and Non-Bearing Trees)

If the P₂O₅ soil test indicates Low, apply triple superphosphate (0-46-0) at 100 lbs per acre. If the K₂O soil test indicates Low, make an application of muriate of potash (0-0-60) at 100 lbs per acre.

If both P₂O₅ and K₂O soil test levels are Low, apply 0-14-14 at 400 lbs per acre.

At Medium or higher P₂O₅ or K₂O soil test levels, additional fertilizer applications are normally not necessary.

The P₂O₅ and K₂O fertilizer may be applied either in the fall after leaves have fallen, or in early spring about 3 or 4 weeks before active growth begins.

Under cover crop culture, apply complete fertilizer as required for cover in the fall with nitrogen only to the tree in spring.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, consult *Growing Peaches & Nectarines in Virginia*, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) publication 422-019 at www.ext.vt.edu or contact your local VCE office.

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