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 $P_2O_5$ or $K_2O$ fertilizer will be needed. The suggested rates of $P_2O_5$ and $K_2O$ to apply are listed in this leaflet, along with the recommended N fertilizer rates.

PREPLANTING

If the $P_2O_5$ or $K_2O$ soil test indicates Low, use the following table to determine the type and amount of fertilizer to use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Test Results</th>
<th>Fertilizer to Use</th>
<th>Amount to Apply (lbs./A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low $P_2O_5$</td>
<td>0-46-0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low $K_2O$</td>
<td>0-0-60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low $P_2O_5$ and $K_2O$</td>
<td>0-14-14</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium or higher $P_2O_5$</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P_2O_5$ and $K_2O$</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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 $P_2O_5$ soil test indicates Low, apply triple superphosphate (0-46-0) at 100 lbs per acre. If the $K_2O$ soil test indicates Low, make an application of muriate of potash (0-0-60) at 100 lbs per acre.

If both $P_2O_5$ and $K_2O$ 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](http://www.ext.vt.edu) or contact your local VCE office.

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