

Dear Brave New OG Gardeners,

So you are switching to organic fertilizers...

...but you're feeling a little confused. How do I use this stuff from Ellen?

So here's a review of the four soil amendments I have to offer:

Fish bone meal, kelp, fish, and Carouse (a mycorrhizal).

Print this for your reference, either from text below or the **attachment** format. Then keep this "cheat sheet" in a zip-lock or page protector with your garden supplies. Ta da! Such a handy-dandy way to remember next spring as well as this season!

FERTILIZER PRIMER

a Quick Reference

1. My gratitude to you on your commitment to nurture living soil! By choosing organic fertilizers, you feed your microbe armies, and then they cycle those nutrients. You are putting the parts of the program together, hurrah!
2. **The Basics:** if you do nothing else, give everything in your yard a foundation of fish bone meal and kelp. I highly recommend this combination to cover NPK and trace minerals.
3. **Please, please** do not overdo on application rates. Too much is as harmful as too little.

Fish Bone Meal: \$16 per 10 lb container

This is a granular fertilizer that is excellent to use for flowers, vegetables, fruits, shrubs and trees. It comes in a 10 lb or 50 lb size. Contents average 6% nitrogen and 10% phosphate plus 25% calcium. Apply at the rate of 2.5 to 5 lbs per 100 sq ft.

Before you plant your open beds, cultivate the fish bone meal into the soil to a depth of 6". For berries and perennial flowers, scatter the fish bone meal over root and drip zones, then scratch in lightly and water well. This will reduce dog and cat interest! Store in container safe from mice, squirrels, bears, and dogs.

High Nitrogen Fish Powder \$7 for one pound bag

Soluble in water—you water it in.

Note: I stock this because it is easier to store than fish emulsion, it's a superior hydrolysate rather than emulsion, and requires no chlorine to preserve it. This is a high-nitrogen (11%) boost for heavy-feeding vegetables.

Application rate: Mix 1 TBS powder per gallon of water or 4-6 lbs per acre, or 4-5 lbs in 20 gallons of water.

Put the dissolved mix into your watering can and apply to foliage and root zone. This is a high-nitrogen boost especially for heavy-nitrogen feeder vegetables: your greens, lettuces, and cabbage family. Apply 3 to 5 times per season.

Store in container that is safe from mice, squirrels, dogs, and cats!

Kelp: \$15 per one pound bag

Immediately transfer your kelp powder in a water tight jar and keep it dry so the powder does not turn to gum with the least humidity or wetness. Tape the label from the bag onto the jar.

Kelp provides potassium, many trace elements, and growth stimulants. It reduces transplant shock and hurries seed sprouting.

Mix 1 tsp kelp powder per gallon of water. Apply with your watering can or sprayer to foliage and root zone. Apply every week or at least 3-5 times per season.

Carouse: \$8 per one pound bag

Carouse is a microbial inoculant for the soil. Rather than a fertilizer, the shining feature is the endo-mycorrhizal fungi that stimulate rapid, vigorous root development and thus faster plant maturity and yield. Contents also include plant proteins, animal proteins, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, trace elements, specialized, pre-selected, adapted soil microbes, bio-organic catalysts and microbial growth stimulants.

Put some **Carouse** in a salt shaker and sprinkle a small amount into the hole just as you are putting in transplants. Or sprinkle in the furrow just before sowing seed. You want **Carouse** at the root zone, and ideally in contact with roots within 24 hours.

Large-scale application: 10 pounds per acre in furrow at planting time.

Storage: Store a temperature below 100 degrees F. Do not freeze.

Keep dry and keep out of direct sunlight.

Combine Fertilizers with Compost Tea?

Yes, yes, yes, these are the foods to feed your beneficial microbes and maintain their high numbers.

Can you mix the kelp or fish powder right into the same watering can (or garbage can) as the compost tea? Yes BUT—

Yes, it's great to apply them at the same time. You save time. Very efficient.

BUT do not combine them and then leave them sitting for more than a few minutes.

Within an hour, the compost tea will go anaerobic (because of heavy dose of food) and will kill your plants. Augh!

PS on January 1st, 2008---

NOTE that some of this product is still available through ACAT at the Farmers Market and through Bob Greig at Alaska Sea-Ag

I hope this helps!

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