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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

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Potassium—How Important Is It To Your Turfgrass?

Potassium (K) is considered one of the BIG THREE macronutrients when it comes to fertilization of turfgrass. It is the last number listed on the fertilizer bag (i.e. 15-5-10) and is a very important nutrient required in the maintenance of a dense and quality turf. Potassium does not influence leaf growth to a great degree but plays a huge role in the ability of turfgrasses to tolerate cold, drought, excessive traffic, salinity, and high temperatures. Other roles for potassium include: activation of enzymes, water regulation in plants, protein synthesis, and CO₂ fixation in photosynthesis.

Potassium deficiencies in turf normally appear as interveinal yellowing of the lower (older) leaves, dieback at the leaf tip, scorching of the leaf margins, and total yellowing of the leaves. Turfgrass plants will appear weakened and wilting/leaf firing will be accelerated. Similar to nitrogen, potassium is highly susceptible to leaching—so monitor your potassium levels closely, especially in sandy soils.

The best approach to determine if you have the appropriate amount of potassium in your soil is to take a soil sample and have it analyzed. If needed, apply the recommended amounts of potassium in the spring and fall seasons. You certainly want to make sure that you have enough potassium present prior to winter to help avoid injury from extremely cold temperatures