

JPA Landscape & Construction, Inc.

March 2013



The sun has finally come out to play. We hope everyone had a wonderful Saint Patrick's Day. We have created a blog to make it easy to access old newsletters and other landscape information. You can see this at [JPA Landscape Blog](#). This month we will be addressing a question of organics, introducing our first plant of the month, introduce some of our new toys, and wrap up with This Month in Maintenance.



Dressing for Spring

[Is Organic worth the Money when it comes to Landscaping?](#)

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Is Organic worth the Money when it comes to Landscaping?

Organic vs. Inorganic Fertilizer

All natural! Not Harmful! Green! Non Toxic!

Everyone is jumping on the organic bandwagon. There is organic food, organic toys, organic pencils, organic hair spray, everywhere you look the option to buy organic has skyrocketed. This expansion has not missed the landscape market. Which brings us to this question today - Is organic fertilizer worth the money when it comes to your landscape?



Let's begin by going over the basic differentials between the organic and inorganic fertilizers (besides the obvious - one is organic) and how these come into play when making your decision.

The Tortoise or the Hare?

Organic fertilizers work slowly as they are broken down by soil organisms that therein allow them to release their nutrients (this takes time). Inorganic fertilizers, in comparison, release instantly into the soil. Instant is good right? Well, that depends. It is more efficient for it to work slowly as this ensures that all the nutrients are absorbed by the soil. On the other hand, sometimes you don't have the time to wait to get the nutrients to the struggling plant material. This is where inorganic fertilizer is the more attractive choice. Inorganic fertilizer packs a bigger punch, containing up to 4 times the amount of macronutrients than an organic fertilizer.

One of the first questions you should be asking yourself is "What are the requirements of my plant material?" For example, the quick acting of the inorganic fertilizer is the better choice with short lived plants like bedding plants.

Downside

The unattractive qualities attributed to inorganic fertilizers center mostly on its misuse. Leeching can occur if you are using inorganic fertilizers and over water or have excessive rain as it will cause the nutrients to push down into the ground too deep to be beneficial to the plant material.

If inorganic fertilizer is over applied it can produce a toxic concentration of salts that cause the plant material to burn. In turn the long term usage of inorganic fertilizer will result in a buildup of these toxic concentrations of salts in the soil and a chemical imbalance. Inorganic fertilizers will deplete the soil organisms needed for plant growth. So although many mishaps can be avoided by applying inorganic fertilizers correctly, the long term result of using inorganic fertilizer is not productive.

Other Benefits to Consider

Rightfully so, organic fertilizer boasts of its ability to build a self-sustaining environment. It improves the soil structure and its workability, allowing more air to get to plant roots. This therein, allows the soil to hold water longer and increases the bacterial and fungal activity in the soil.

They Are Fundamentally the Same?

With this information it is important to understand that while there are pros and cons, inorganic and organic fertilizers are made up of the same stuff and provide plant material with the nutrients they need to look good and be healthy. Some have gone so far as to say, "Your zucchini plant doesn't care if the nitrogen it's feeding on came from a compost pile or a test tube". There may be some validity to this assertion. Chemical fertilizers will grow a plant but they will not create or sustain a healthy soil.

So which is it? Organic or inorganic? Your decision should be guided by your objective. The type of soil and end goal are what determine if the organic is worth the price. An integrated approach might be your best bet. Studies have shown that the usage of both organic and inorganic fertilizers resulted in higher yields and "improved the capacity of the soil to supply nutrients". This may be just what the doctor ordered.

Now, deciding which type of organic fertilizer is a whole nother' story. In fact, you may not know just how many types there are. Check out these articles [Planet Natural](#) & [Green Living](#).

Crataegus

Plant of the Month

You may have seen this beauty lining the streets and posing as a hedge. This ornamental plant is native to the Northern Hemisphere and goes by the names of hawberry, thornapple, or hawthorn. We bring the Crataegus to your attention as it is among the trees most recommended for water conservation landscapes and it has quite the personality.



Its extensive use in folklore gives this tree a mystical aura. It was believed to be particularly deadly to vampires. In other areas it was thought to be the haven of fairies. The fairies in these tales weren't so pleasant as they would steal you if you were caught sleeping under their hawthorn.

The miniature apple-like fruit the Crataegus produces has been referred to as Pixie Pear, Cuckoo's Bead, and my personal favorite, Chucky Cheese. The fruits of the Crataegus have been studied for their medicinal use in treating heart problems. In Mexico, they are

widely popular, being used to make holiday punch, jam, candy, and even to fill piñatas. I should mention, as a warning, overdose on this appetizing fruit can lead to an alarmingly low blood pressure and heart problems.

If you are looking for an addition to your landscape this Spring you might want to consider adopting the Crataegus.

New Toys!!

A Little on JPA

We have upgraded our equipment! Our three new recently upgraded pieces of equipment are (2) 10K dump trailers and a Bobcat S185 skid steer tractor. These have been some of our most boastful pieces of equipment the company has purchased. Their working capabilities have drastically increased service levels. Recently one of our dump trailers carried 10,000 lbs. of concrete from a job and was unloaded in under 3 minutes at the recycling center. The Bobcat S185 well, what's not to say.. A skid steer loader is essential to a landscaping contractor on top of being a blast to operate!



This Month In Maintenance

March Maintenance Activities

- Irrigation start ups
- Aerate Turf
- Fertilize Turf & Shrubs
- Seasonal Color Installation
- Edge Bi-weekly
- Fertilize Color
- Mow Bi-weekly
- Pre-Emergent Application for Groundcover
- Shrub Reduction



I also want to bring attention to your irrigation systems. Water is getting turned back on and we want to make sure there is no waste. Make sure to get any outstanding irrigation repairs taken care of.

Sincerely,

Your Local Landscaper

