

Nice and Slow Is the Way to Go

Enhanced efficiency fertilizer from Koch Turf & Ornamental is a critical tool.

Advertorial

Enhanced efficiency fertilizer is a critical tool for Brad Johnson's business. That's why he uses Koch Turf & Ornamental products extensively at Lawn America.

"Koch is the nationwide leader as far as production of all enhanced efficiency fertilizer products," says Johnson. "They're good, clean, consistent products."

Johnson, president of Lawn America, based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has used enhanced efficiency fertilizer for years. Sometimes Lawn America has to start a little earlier in the year than is ideal before nitrogen release is needed on bermudagrass lawns. This

is when applications of enhanced efficiency fertilizer have helped.

"So we crank it up pretty well and start out with a 70 percent slow-release blend early on in spring, which would be late March into April, and then bring it down to 50 percent later on in the season," Johnson says. "Even during summer, we'll just about always have at least a 25 percent slow-release component in there, whether it be UFLEXX stabilized nitrogen or XCU slow-release fertilizer."

In certain cases, Johnson is looking to hold the color for 10 to 12 weeks, and in that case POLYON controlled-release fertilizer from Koch works the best. In other cases, he's looking to slow down growth.

"If we were applying straight urea, you would have a surge of growth for a week or two or three and then it would be all gone and would quickly fade out," says Johnson. "So we're trying to level out that nitrogen response to where it's not all up and down. We want it to be a consistent color, but in our case, once we get into summer, most of our customers are in a 5.5- to 6-fix cycle. So we're going out there quite frequently for fertilization anyway, and in that case, UFLEXX or XCU fertilizer seems to do a great job."

Johnson offers programs featuring from four to seven applications, with seven being his premium program and the one he tries to promote the most.

"With that very best program, the customer is getting four applications of granular fertilizer. With the six-step program, they get three,



and then the least they will get is two. For them to be a customer, they have got to let us fertilize at least twice during the season. That's on bermudagrass and zoysia."

Lawn America's premium program supplies about 6 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet over the course of a season—plenty, Johnson says, for bermudagrass.

With fescue customers, he applies liquid organic soil amendments in summer instead of granular fertilizer, so fescue customers are only getting three applications of granular during the course of the season.

"The soil amendments help the turf better utilize nutrients in

there, and the fescue just doesn't need a whole lot of nitrogen in summer, so we fertilize it well in spring and then two in fall and that suffices," Johnson says.

As far as planning out the year, timing, Johnson says, is critical. His first regular application is weed control, which happens in early February as the bermudagrass is dormant and doesn't need fertilizer.

"Then we start to fertilize it in late March- April with a controlled-release product, which allows us to put it out a little heavier than normal. Also, we know the nitrogen will not go anywhere until the soil temperature warms up and the plant actually needs that nitrogen so we can get out before the turf starts greening up or while it's greening up rather than being late."

If Johnson waited till May 10th before doing the first application of fertilizer on bermudagrass, that's later than ideal in Oklahoma. Using more controlled-release fertilizer allows him to get ahead of the game.

Lawn America always considers the environmental impact of its programs, so Johnson says any time he can get better utilization of nitrogen and not allow it to become volatile or leach, that's a good thing—from an agronomic standpoint, environmental standpoint and cost standpoint.

"We're all about being as efficient with our nitrogen as possible," Johnson says.



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Lawn and landscape professionals are changing up their business models by incorporating POLYON® controlled-release fertilizer. With its Reactive Layers Coating, this enhanced efficiency fertilizer consistently meters out nutrition for months. Less time fertilizing frees up crews to visit more properties. It also opens the door to add new, profit-generating services. Integrating POLYON® fertilizer into your existing programs is a progressive step toward differentiating yourself from the competition, while growing your business. Look into it.

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