




Apples – Nutrient Application Timing

When should I apply nutrients to my Apples?

Nitrogen and Potassium are the plant nutrients needed the most by apple trees. As a result, yearly applications are usually needed.

Nitrogen is mostly associated with plant growth. Too much nitrogen leads to too much leaf growth, fruit maturity is delayed; and the storage life of the fruit is reduced.

Potassium is associated with better fruit color, more sugars, and better fruit flavor. Since potassium moves slowly in the soil, applications should be made to the soil in the fall or early winter so that it can move down into the soil with any winter rains.

When to apply		Percent annual application	
		Nitrogen (N)	Potassium (K)
2 weeks after Budburst		30-40% total	40% total
Fruit set (Bloom/petal fall)		30% total	30% total
1 week after Harvest		30-40% total	30% total

Note on Phosphorus. While Phosphorus (which is important in developing new tissue in plants) is also needed by apples in reasonably large amounts, it is very immobile and as a result is usually incorporated into the soil when the orchard is established. **Surface applications of phosphorus are not very effective.**