

# Fertilizer Education & Best Practices

## Protect water quality, conserve resources, and maintain healthy landscapes.

### *1. Understand Your Soil*

- Bell County soils range from clay-heavy to sandy—nutrient needs vary.
- **Get tested:** Contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Bell County for low-cost testing.
- **How often?** Every 2–3 years or when making big changes to your lawn/garden.

### *2. Choose the Right Fertilizer*

- Use **slow-release nitrogen** to feed longer and reduce runoff.
- Avoid high-phosphorus fertilizers unless soil tests show a deficiency.
- Read the label: For lawns, a **3-1-2 NPK ratio** is often ideal.

### *3. Time It Right*

- **Apply in:** Late spring and early fall for turfgrass.
- **Avoid:** Fertilizing during summer heat, dormancy, or right before rain.
- **Follow:** Bell County watering rules to prevent overwatering and runoff.

### *4. Apply Responsibly*

- Calibrate your spreader—**don't over-apply**.
- **Sweep up** fertilizer from hard surfaces.
- **Leave a 10-ft buffer** from waterways and storm drains.

### *5. BMPs for Golf Courses & Landscape Operations*

- Use **precision tools**: GPS-guided spreaders, controlled-release fertilizers.
- **Stay up to date** on TCEQ and local rules.
- **Implement nutrient management plans** to save money and protect water.

### *6. Local Resources*

- **Bell County Extension Office**: Soil tests, lawn tips, events  
[bell.agrilife.org](http://bell.agrilife.org)
- **Texas A&M AgriLife Turfgrass Program**: Expert turf care  
[aggieturf.tamu.edu](http://aggieturf.tamu.edu)
- **Texas SmartScape**: Native, drought-friendly landscaping  
[txsmartscape.com](http://txsmartscape.com)

## Why It Matters

Poor practices lead to:

- Algae blooms & fish kills
- Groundwater contamination
- Wasted time, water, and money

**Smart fertilizer use helps protect Nolan Creek, Belton Lake, Stillhouse Hollow Lake, and your own backyard.**