

# What's New with Pure Prairie



Pure Prairie Organics

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## Greetings Gardners!

Today we made our third application for the lawn and this year just seems to be zooming along! We applied my custom blended fertilizer of alfalfa, meat and bone meal, molasses, brewers yeast and to that we added high calcium lime which I get from Pontiac, IL. This is a real gentle formula that does well in the heat of summer. It is definitely non-burning, safe for children and pets, does not need to be watered in and can be walked on right after we apply it. Actually, we can fertilize in our bare feet if we want to!

As I write this in late July, it is quite dry but with the cloud cover the plants are showing little water stress. Some plants do not look real well (tomatoes?) and that could be do a lack of sunshine with the cloudy weather from May thru now. Larry Acker, my weather guy, says this pattern should hold until about Aug 7. He is calling for a wet August and a dry September. We shall see of course but it has really turned out to be a mild summer.

Make sure to keep feeding your annuals and vegetables. They are heavy feeders and need lots of food. In the spring, there is lots of food in the ground that was digested over the winter but that gets eaten up and needs to be replaced. Bone meal, alfalfa and weekly applications of ammonia (2 ounces per gallon of water) is a great beginning. Mix the ammonia with an equal amount of karo syrup, it will work much better. Alfalfa is available as rabbit food or guinea pig food and available from the pet store. (or from me!)

Most of the lawns look really good; a healthy dry green-brown which means that it is dormant. When the color of the grass gets close to straw brown then it is close to dying and needs to be watered. If little crop circles are showing up in the lawn then that is a bad fungus at work and can be controlled with yogurt. 2-3 ounces per gallon of water with an equal amount of sugar in a sprinkling can or bucket and applied to the spots. Stonyfield yogurt has 5 active cultures in it but the best is Lifeway kefir with 7- 10 active cultures. Make sure to just use the plain unflavored kind. Vinegar is also a really good fungicide. I use raw apple cider vinegar because it has some good enzymes in it but any kind will work. Mix 2-3 ounces per gallon of water with

some sugar (same as above) and apply in the areas. Actually we can do our whole lawn with this mix as a nice tonic. The acetic acid in the vinegar will dissolve some minerals in the soil and release it for the plants and also knock out the bad bacteria but it is friendly to the good bacteria. Way cool. Peroxide is a also a nice fungicide, but I don't want to confuse everybody with all these alternatives! If you are curious, you can call me and I will give you the recipe.

As you may remember, plants do not have a stomach so the digestion has to happen in the soil. The good microbes in the soil need a high calcium environment which is why I add so much gypsum and high calcium lime to the lawns. We go thru about 2 tons per week. Last year I used 51 tons of gypsum and 20 tons of high cal. It really makes a difference in the softness of the soil and the water is able to soak in much faster, too. Working with the microbes makes a big difference in the health of the soil and the plants and reduces the need for mechanical aeration and dethatching. I am definitely aerating and dethatching your lawns, just not with machines!

A word about grub season which should be here about Aug 15. I don't think they will be a big problem this year. The food for the grubs is a fungus that attacks the lawn and my fertilizers do a good job of feeding the good microbes and out competing the bad guys. The bad fungi are the food for the grubs so taking away their food is a nice strategy. Always a few are around. Onesy twosy is nothing to worry about. The universities say not to treat until we have 4-5-7 per square foot which is a high amount. Last year I treated four lawns out of 400 that I take care of. The year before was bad and I had to treat about 40 out of 400. They like grass that is under stress and this has been a low stress year so far. Alfalfa is terrific at destressing plants which is why I like to use it so much.

That's it for now. As always, call me if you have a question. I always enjoy talking to you and making your gardening experience more fun and enjoyable.

Have a great summer!  
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