

# National Arborist Association

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Why fertilize a tree?

If you fertilized your lawn, you may not have fertilized your trees. Tree care companies have specialized equipment that can deliver fertilizer right where the trees need it – the tree’s root zone, just below your lawn’s root zone.

In forests, trees shade out grass and other plants so the tree’s roots don’t have to compete with roots of other plants. Trees are free to absorb all the nutrients they need. Your lawn is a harsher environment for trees. In your lawn, trees must compete with grass roots for valuable nutrients. When you drop fertilizer on top of your lawn, the grass receives most of the benefits.

A different type and method of fertilization is used to fertilize trees than what is used to fertilize lawns, since trees don’t grow the same as grass. For trees, slow release fertilizer is applied directly to the tree roots, just below the grass roots. This can be done with special liquid fertilizers injected into the soil (sometimes called “deep-root fertilization”) or dry fertilizers poured into holes drilled into the root zone of the tree.

Trees also respond to fertilizer differently than your grass. Over-fertilization can create tree health problems, so the need for fertilization should be determined by measuring annual growth, checking visual symptoms and/or chemically analyzing the soil or tree leaves.

Tree fertilization should be done according to **ANSI A300 Part 2 standards for tree fertilization**. A300 is the tree care industry’s standards for tree maintenance. Here part of what A300 says about fertilizing trees:

- ✓ A soil or foliage analysis should be done determine if fertilization is needed
- ✓ **Slow-release fertilizer is preferred**
- ✓ Fertilizer ratio should be 3:1:1 or 3:1:2, or adjusted for local conditions
- ✓ 2 to 4 pounds of nitrogen should be applied per 1000 square feet
- ✓ **Sub-surface fertilization is preferred when lawn grass is present**
- ✓ The fertilization area must be known before fertilizing
- ✓ Fertilizer holes or injection sites must be evenly spaced in the fertilization area
- ✓ Fertilizer must be evenly distributed in the holes or injection sites

To find more information or search for an NAA-member tree care company in your area, visit the NAA website at [www.natlarb.com](http://www.natlarb.com).