

# Fertigation

With the advent of drip irrigation, how do you fertilize plant material? Amid the continuing concern over water shortages, it appears that many commercial growers, landscape contractors, as well as homeowners, are either initially installing, or converting to, drip irrigation. But this change poses yet another dilemma. How do you fertilize the plant material if utilizing a drip irrigation system in order to conserve water, as well as save time and money? No longer can you broadcast dry granular fertilizer onto the soil surface and expect it to be leached into the soil by overhead watering where the plant's roots can pick-up the nutrients. Therefore, the fertilizer *must* be dispensed directly into the irrigation system itself!

Recognizing there was a real need to not only conserve water by utilizing drip irrigation, but also fertilize plant material, Strong Enterprises designed and patented a fertilizer injector. These injectors make fertilizing not only easy, but economical and efficient as well! Add-It® fertilizer injectors fit into any drip, sub-surface or conventional sprinkler irrigation system, and are totally proportioning. In other words, the concentration of fertilizer being delivered is at a constant rate from start to finish, unlike some other injectors! They accept any totally water-soluble fertilizer on the market today like Scotts Miracle Gro® and Peters Professional® when premixed with water. In addition, a wetting agent can be dispensed to breakup compacted soils, micro-nutrients and Vitamin Institute's SUPERthrive™ containing vitamins and hormones for healthier plants, and vitamin B-1 when transplanting trees and shrubs. Add-It® can also be installed before a manifold of valves under full line constant pressure up to 125 PSI, or can be installed after a single control valve. A fertilizer injector is an essential part of any drip irrigation system, as are a filter and pressure regulator.

The concept of fertilizing directly through the irrigation system, commonly known as *fertigation*, has been used by the agricultural community for quite some time. When commercial growers began to utilize drip irrigation and abandoning flood or conventional overhead sprinklers, they immediately realized that they must also provide a method to fertilize their crops. Thus sprang the concept of *fertigation*.

Lawns, trees, shrubs, and potted plants absorb fertilizer more efficiently when it's in liquid form. Why? Because liquid fertilizers not only work faster than dry pellets or granules, they move through the soil and are more readily available for absorption by your lawn or garden plants. Therefore less fertilizer is used, making it more environmentally friendly.

Over many years, tests have concluded that applying liquid fertilizer on a regular basis is much more beneficial to a plant than being fed infrequently with a dry, granular form of fertilizer. Liquid fertilizer is absorbed far more easily by a plant's root system, and there are no leftover residues or minerals that can, over a period of prolonged use, damage a plant or lawn.

Many homeowners, landscape contractors and commercial growers already know about the numerous benefits of *fertigation*. In particular, no longer have to laboriously spread fertilizer by hand, using spreaders and/or hose-end applicators, thus saving significantly on labor *and* on the cost of fertilizer. It's a win, win, situation. Everyone saves and the plants do better. Once a fertilizer injector is installed into either a drip or conventional sprinkler irrigation system, fertilizer travels with the water directly to the plants or turf, creating healthier plants! And, as an additional benefit, surfactants (wetting agents) can also be injected to help breakup compacted soils, root hormones and micro-nutrients for healthier plants, as well as vitamin B-1 when transplanting trees and shrubs.

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