

Buyer's guide / Houseplant fertilisers

Feeding houseplants

Geoff Hodge rounds up fertilisers available for producing healthy houseplants



To ensure you get the best from your houseplants, it is important that you feed them regularly while they're in growth. We Brits tend to buy more houseplants now than at any other time of year - especially poinsettias, cyclamen, azaleas, orchids and other flowering houseplants. Although you could use any fertiliser, several are specifically marketed for houseplants and these tend to be liquid feeds. Some even come pre-diluted - the aim

being that this makes them more convenient and easier to use. You're then more likely to feed regularly and correctly as there's no mess or bother using them - just apply and feed.

Liquid fertilisers work instantly, so plants are fed immediately, but they are also quickly used up, so you need to apply them regularly; always make sure to check the manufacturer's instructions.

Some suppliers also provide feeds for specific plants and Chempak, for instance, only produces such feeds, including those for African violets, bonsai, cacti and succulents, citrus, orchids and palms.

Nutrients

The major nutrients plants need are nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P) and potassium or potash (K); listed on packs as an NPK ratio. Plants need these three in relatively large amounts.

Other nutrients are required in smaller amounts (such as magnesium), and some in tiny but crucial amounts, called trace elements (such as boron).

If the NPK ratio is the same (such as 7:7:7), they are called balanced feeds, providing all three major nutrients in equal amounts, whereas high potash feeds, which help encourage flowering, might have a ratio of 8:11:23.

Neudorff Organic Multipurpose Plant Feed

A high-potash feed, good for flowering plants, which contains a wide range of nutrients that are obtained from organic sources.

- NPK 3:1:5 plus trace elements & plant nutrients
- Size 1-litre
- Makes 200-litres of feed
- Recommended feeding frequency Every 14 days
- Price guide £4.99
- Specialist feeds available Orchid



Vitax House Plant Liquid Feed

A new houseplant fertiliser for 2011/2012. It can be diluted as normal, or just add five drops directly to the compost and water in.

- NPK 7:3:5 plus seaweed
- Size 200ml
- Makes 80-litres of feed
- Recommended feeding frequency At every watering in spring/summer, every four to six weeks in autumn/winter
- Price guide £3.10



Westland Indoor Plant Food

One of a new range of concentrated plant feeds for indoor plants for 2011/2012.

- NPK 5:2:5:7 plus trace elements
- Size 250ml
- Makes 25-litres of feed
- Recommended feeding frequency Every seven to 14 days
- Price guide £3.99
- Specialist feeds available Bonsai; cactus; citrus; orchid



Win our 'best buy'

We have 60 bottles of the Best Buy Baby Bio Original to give away! Send your name and address to Garden News Houseplant Fertiliser Giveaway, PO Box 57, Coates, Peterborough PE7 2FE or enter online at www.greatcompetitions.co.uk. Closing date is December 13. Please write 'do not contact' if you don't want to be contacted by us or by carefully selected partner organisations.



CONCENTRATED FEEDS

Baby Bio Original

Baby Bio has been around for many years and is still one of the most popular feeds. It is the most economical to use, so gets our BEST BUY.

- NPK 10.6:4.4:1.7 plus trace elements
- Size 175ml
- Makes 35-85-litres of feed, depending on use
- Recommended feeding frequency At every watering or every two weeks
- Price guide £2.49
- Specialist feeds available Orchid; citrus



Growth Technology Houseplant Focus

A high-potash feed that contains a wide range of nutrients and growth enhancers.

- NPK 1.9:0.7:3.2 plus trace elements, seaweed and organic plant acids
- Sizes 100ml, 300ml, 500ml, 1-litre
- Makes 20-litres of feed per 100ml
- Recommended feeding frequency Every seven days
- Price guide 100ml £1.99; 300ml £3.99; 500ml £4.99; 1-litre £6.99
- Specialist feeds available Bonsai; citrus; palm

READY-TO-USE FEEDS

Baby Bio Ready to use

Pre-diluted, ready-to-use format of Baby Bio. NPK ratio is not actual percentage of nutrients, unlike others quoted in the ready-to-use section.

- NPK 10.6:4.4:1.7
- Size 2-litres
- Feeds 40 x 9cm to 11cm (3½-4½in) pots/litre
- Recommended feeding frequency Every two weeks
- Price guide £4.49



Doff Multi-Purpose Pour & Feed

Natural blend of plant hormones with seaweed extracts to help condition the compost and aid recovery from stress and disease.

- NPK amounts unavailable
- Size 3-litres
- Feeds 65 up to 20cm (8in) pots/litre
- Recommended feeding frequency Monthly
- Price guide £5.99



Miracle-Gro Pour & Feed

The best selling product in the ready-to-use range of feeds, it is based on the Miracle-Gro fertiliser, and now in a new easy-to-use bottle.

- NPK 0.039:0.03:0.049 plus magnesium
- Size 1-litre; 3-litres
- Feeds 40 x 9cm to 11cm (3½-4½in) pots/litre
- Recommended feeding frequency Every seven to 14 days
- Price guide 1-litre £3.49; 3-litres £5.49



DRIP FEEDERS

The most convenient method of feeding - drip feeders drip fertiliser into the compost over several days. Just snap off the tip and insert into the compost. You can see when the feed runs out and needs replacing.

Growing Success Flowering Houseplant Droplet Feeder

- NPK 0.12:0.36:0.14
- Size 30ml
- Use One feeder up to 11cm pot
- Recommended feeding frequency Lasts for up to 14 days; use once/month
- Price guide 99p each; £3.49 for pack of four
- Specialist feeds available Citrus; orchid



Growing Success Houseplant Droplet Feeder

- NPK 0.6:0.2:0.02
- Size 30ml
- Use One feeder up to 11cm pot
- Recommended feeding frequency Lasts for up to 14 days; use once/month
- Price guide 99p each; £3.49 for pack of four
- Specialist feeds available Citrus; orchid



Vitax Foliar Drip Feed & Vitax Multipurpose Drip Feed

- NPK 0.3:0.14:0.11 plus trace elements
- Size 30ml
- Use One feeder for up to 12cm to 15cm (4½-6in) pot
- Recommended feeding frequency Lasts for up three weeks for pack of 10
- Price guide £5.57
- Specialist feeds available Orchid; poinsettia



OTHER FEEDS

Baby Bio House Plant Food Tablets

A slow-release fertiliser that feeds for up to 30 days. Just pop the tablets into the compost and they do the rest!

- NPK 8:11:23 plus trace elements
- Size 50 tablets
- Use Two tablets/10cm to 15cm (4-6in) pot
- Recommended feeding frequency Monthly
- Price guide £2.99



Growth Technology Houseplant Myst

Misting the foliage is a good way to feed plants. Nutrients and growth enhancer help plants grow healthier, and contains a pest repellent and leaf conditioner.

- NPK Amounts unavailable plus seaweed extracts, plant acids and plant oils
- Sizes 100ml, 300ml
- Use 8-10 squirts
- Recommended feeding frequency Weekly
- Price guide 100ml £1.99; 300ml £4.99
- Specialist feeds available Orchid



Suppliers

Baby Bio from Bayer Garden
0845 345 4100
www.bayergarden.co.uk

Chempak from Thompson & Morgan
0844 248 5383
www.thompson-morgan.com

Doff Portland
0115 983 4300
www.doff.co.uk
Growing Success from William Sinclair
01522 537561
www.william-sinclair.co.uk

Growth Technology
0845 430 3001
or 01823 325291
www.focus-on-plants.com
Miracle-Gro from Scotts Miracle-Gro
0845 190 1881
www.lovethegarden.com
Neudorff from Doff Portland
0115 983 4300
www.neudorff-trade.co.uk

Vitax
01530 510060
www.vitax.co.uk
Westland Horticulture
0870 063 3566
www.gardenhealth.com

Offers / Great deals for gardeners

FREE!

5 Christmas roses

For every reader - *just pay postage & packaging

ALSO known as *Helleborus niger*, the Christmas rose is a traditional evergreen perennial that will delight you each spring. Among the first plants to flower as winter fades, its creamy white flowers with majestic golden crowns herald the start of a new season. Arriving as bare-roots, the Christmas rose is easy to grow and fully hardy.

To claim your five free Christmas roses, simply complete the order form and send it with £4.50 to cover postage.



PLUS... more offers from Mont Rose of Guernsey

Evergreen clematis 'Avalanche' AGM
Clematis 'Avalanche' produces the largest flowers of any evergreen clematis. White blooms with golden stamens appear in March, which contrast with the dark green foliage.
1 plant in 7cm pot for £7.99
3 plants in 7cm pots for £14.98 - Save £7.99

Everlasting sweet pea AGM
Lathyrus latifolius is a perennial relative of the sweet pea, producing masses of magenta flowers blooming from summer to early autumn. It can reach a height of up to 2.5m (8ft).
5 bare-roots for £12.99

Primula vialii
An RHS Award of Garden Merit plant, *Primula vialii* will add beautiful colour to your early summer garden with their upright, red-tipped flower spikes, onto which tiny lilac petals open. They're ideal for damp shady spots in your garden.
6 bare-roots for £14.99

Alchemilla mollis
Also known as lady's mantle, large grey-green foliage is topped by spreading heads of tiny star-like yellow flowers in multiple clusters. It's ideal planted en-masse for ground cover or edging paths, and tolerates a range of adverse conditions. Drought tolerant.
3 bare-roots for £11.49

ORDER FORM

How to claim and order
To claim your five free *Helleborus niger* and to order additional items, simply tick the relevant boxes on the order form. Complete the application form and include £4.50 p&p for the plants if you are just claiming the free offer.

If you are ordering additional items enter the quantities you require on the order form and send the appropriate payment. No stamps or cash please.

Send your completed application form to: Garden News, Free *Helleborus niger* Offer, Ref GNP17, PO BOX 30, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 9YQ
Payment Please make cheques/PO payable to: Mont Rose of Guernsey Ltd and write your name and address on the back or complete your credit card details. Offer closes end of January 2012 and is open to UK residents only.

Your contract of supply is with Mont Rose of Guernsey Ltd. Terms and conditions on request. All offers are subject to availability. Only one free offer per person. Allow 28 days for delivery.

CODE	ITEM	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
6056	Clematis 'Avalanche' (1 plant in 7cm pot)	£7.99		
6093	Clematis 'Avalanche' (3 plants in 7cm pots)	£14.98		
3149	<i>Alchemilla mollis</i> (3 bare-roots)	£11.49		
3039	<i>Primula vialii</i> (6 bare-roots)	£14.99		
3040	Everlasting sweet pea (5 bare-roots)	£12.99		
3016	5 Christmas roses (1 order per person)	FREE	1	£4.50 p&p
GNP15		TOTAL		

PLEASE SEND ORDER & PAYMENT TO:
Garden News Free *Helleborus niger* Offer, GNP17, PO BOX 30, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 9YQ
I enclose a cheque/postal order for £_____ made payable to Mont Rose of Guernsey Ltd (with name and address on the back) OR charge my Visa/Mastercard / Maestro card with:

£_____ Card Number _____

Start Date _____ / _____ Expiry Date _____ / _____

Issue No (Maestro/Switch) _____ Signature _____

Title _____ Initial _____ Surname _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____ Email address _____

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