

FERTFACTS

FOLIAR FERTILISERS SPRAY GUIDE FACT SHEET

Foliar sprays are a convenient way to apply additional nutrients to plants, supplementing those taken up from the soil.

For some nutrients in some crops, foliar sprays are the most effective way to apply the nutrient, e.g. some micronutrients, and calcium sprays in some fruit crops.

Foliar sprays also provide a quick means to help overcome an existing nutrient deficiency.

Leaf and fruit burn can occur if the rate of nutrient sprayed on the foliage is too high. On the other hand, if the concentration is too low, plant demands for the nutrient may not be adequately met.

In general, crop demands for micronutrients (trace elements), which are taken up by plants in small amounts, can be met through foliar sprays.

However, it is impossible to completely meet the demand for the macronutrients, e.g. nitrogen and potassium, through foliar sprays in most crops.

The following table has been prepared as a guide and a quick reference to application rates and spray concentrations for commonly applied foliar fertilisers. Lower rates may be required in sensitive crops, e.g. strawberry.

Cotton is one of the most tolerant crops, followed by cereals. Among the vegetable crops, brassicas and cucurbits are reasonably tolerant, while beans are among the most susceptible crops.

The incidence of fertiliser burn is influenced by many factors, including the prevailing weather conditions and water quality.

Unless instructed otherwise, avoid spraying during flowering, as fruit, nut and seed set may be reduced.

Where two or more fertilisers are to be foliar-applied simultaneously, the individual application rates may need to be reduced. Repeat sprays may be required to make up for the shortfall. Check that the fertilisers are compatible in solution before they are mixed.

As a rule of thumb, micronutrients are applied as 1 % solutions (1 kg/100 L) in low volume sprays (< 100 L/ha) in field crops, and as 0.1 % sprays (100 g/100 L) in high volume sprays in horticultural crops.

Macronutrients are applied at higher concentrations, typically in the range of 5 - 10 % w/v in field crops (5 - 10 kg/100 L), 1 - 2 % in vegetables (1 - 2 kg/100 L), and 0.5 % in tree crops (500 g/100L).

Typical spray volumes in horticulture, wetting the leaves to the point of run-off, are 500 - 800 L/ha in vegetable crops, and 1 500 L/ha in tree crops.

Before preparing spray solutions, refer to the "Use Directions" for Incitec Pivot Fertiliser products, or label information for other products. For further information, obtain a copy of the Incitec Pivot Agritopic on "Foliar Fertilisers". These can be obtained from your Incitec Pivot Fertilisers' distributor.

Test spray before use, to check for signs of crop damage.

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